

COME BLOW YOUR HORN. It was a banner year for the Philippine Stock Exchange in Makati City. At the close of the last working day of 2007, brokers and the staff bring on the confetti and high hopes that the good times roll into 2008.

EDWIN BACASMAS

# Killing sparks violence

Even as Pakistan weeps for Bhutto

**GARHI KHUDA**  
Bakhsh, Pakistan—Former Premier Benazir Bhutto, killed in a suicide attack that plunged the nuclear-armed country into one of the worst crises in its 60-year history, was laid to rest in her family's ancestral grave Friday amid the wails and tears of hundreds of thousands of mourners.

Bhutto's husband, Asif Zardari, wept as her coffin was lowered into the tomb at the white, three-domed mausoleum deep in Pakistan's rural south.

Her son Bilawal appeared in a state of shock as a mullah led the throng in prayers and chants of "Allahu Akbar" (God is Greater).

Bhutto's assassination Thursday plunged the country deep into turmoil.

Even as she was being buried, her furious supporters in other cities ransacked banks, waged shootouts with police and burned train stations in a frightening

KILLING/A13



GRIEF RUNS IN THE STREETS. A supporter of Benazir Bhutto (left) wails out his grief as a car burns after being set on fire by protesters to the killing of the former prime minister.



## GMA, world leaders condemn assassination

FROM MOSCOW TO WASHINGTON, from Rome to Manila and points in between, world leaders yesterday expressed outrage at the assassination of Pakistan's opposition leader Benazir Bhutto, condemning it as a frontal attack on democracy in the Islamic republic.

They lauded her bravery and commitment to democratic reform.

In the United States, a tense-looking President George W. Bush Thursday demanded that those responsible be tracked down and brought to justice.

"The United States strongly condemns this cowardly act by murderous extremists who are trying to undermine Pakistan's

democracy," Bush told reporters at his Texas ranch.

"We stand with the people of Pakistan in their struggle against the forces of terror and extremism."

The United Nations Security Council voted unanimously to condemn the killing and urged all nations to help bring those responsible for "this reprehensible act" to justice.

President Macapagal-Arroyo called the attack "an assault on democracy."

"The Philippines joins hands with the entire civilized world in solidarity against such mindless barbarity and in unwavering defense of peace, freedom,

GMA, WORLD/A13

*She was beautiful, brilliant, charismatic; her life a sprawling epic*

ISLAMABAD, PAKISTAN—THE suicide attack that killed Pakistani opposition leader Benazir Bhutto cut short an epic life, one bathed in blood and awash with controversy.

Bhutto was many things—zealous guardian of her dead father's legacy, aristocratic populist, accused rogue, even one of People magazine's 50 most beautiful people.

And in the end, she was a victim of roiling passions in the na-

tion she sought to lead for a third time.

To the West, she was the appealing and glamorous face of Pakistan—a trailblazing feminist, the first woman to lead a Muslim nation in modern times, an icon for democracy—though her aura was dimmed by accusations of corruption.

But to many Pakistanis, she was simply a leader who spoke for them, their needs and their hopes. (See World, Page A20.)

Beautiful, charismatic and ar-

ticulate, she was a dangerous opponent for the government.

Bhutto's political skills stemmed from her bloodstained family history, years of combat against a former military regime from jail—and finally two terms in power in the shark-infested waters of Pakistani politics.

"I didn't choose this life, it chose me," she wrote in the introduction to her memoir, "Daughter of the East."

SHE WAS/A13

## BRIDGING THE DIGITAL GAP

### GMA's press office prefers cell phones to P739-M satellite grid

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

(Last of three parts)

MISMANAGEMENT, BUREAUCRATIC delays and lack of technological expertise hobbled a P739-million satellite-based nationwide broadband network of the government's information machinery.

The Philippine Administrative Network Project (PANP) services the news gathering and dissemination network of the Philippine Information Agency and the Bureau of Broadcast Services (BBS) from the PIA offices in Quezon City to 27 sites across the country.

The system enables the government to feed press releases and information on government policies and events to the public through the PIA's 10 regional offices, the state television network NBN 4 and 17 stations of Radyo ng Bayan.

GMA'S PRESS/A4

**i-TEAM Report**  
Fernando del Mundo  
Chief

### Catanduanes shows how at the least cost

By Fernan Ganan  
Inquirer Southern Luzon

VIRAC, CATANDUANES—A former congressman put his pork barrel allocation where his mouth is and showed the government how it could provide a communications facility to rural villages at the least cost.

The program of then Catanduanes Rep. Leandro B. Verceles Jr. worked for four years, un-

CATANDUANES/A4

## Palparan to PDI: I have record of good results

By Tonette Orejas  
Inquirer Central Luzon

RETIRED MAJ. GEN. JOVITO Palparan Jr. yesterday said the INQUIRER had not been reporting the "good results" of the government's anti-insurgency campaign in areas where he had been assigned.

Palparan called the INQUIRER

to point out what to him was an "imbalance" in its reporting.

"You forget to give attention to the performance of the people on the ground," he said.

Palparan, 57, gave his views after the Court of Appeals issued a writ of amparo in favor of brothers Raymond and Reynaldo Manalo of Bulacan, who claimed they were detained by

Palparan and his men in Bulacan, Nueva Ecija and Pangasinan for 18 months.

The writ of amparo requires respondents to take action to resolve a grievance and not merely deny the allegations against them.

The court's second division directly linked Palparan to the abduction of civilians suspected

of being insurgents.

In a decision issued on Dec. 26, the appellate court said that when Palparan was in the active service he pursued a "command policy" of encouraging the arrest of people without due process and sufficient basis.

The court said there was no question that the Manalo brothers

PALPARAN/A8

## Warning: Look ma, no hands

By Beverly T. Natividad



LIVING EXAMPLES Firecrackers did this to Adolfo de la Cruz (right) and his son Ryan. They are presented to the media by Health Secretary Francisco Duque to stress his New Year drive.

STUMPS WHERE THEIR hands used to be are all Rodolfo de la Cruz and his son Ryan have to show for the fate they shared in last New Year's revelry.

The Department of Health (DOH) is hoping the father-and-son example would be enough to scare the public out of using firecrackers to usher in 2008.

The DOH presented Rodolfo and Ryan to the media yesterday as part of the campaign that includes the usual posters and television ads explaining the dangers of firecrackers.

Five-year-old Ryan, singing

WARNING/A8



### Priests slug it out, break peace in little town of Bethlehem

BETHLEHEM, WEST BANK—THEY SAY cleanliness is next to godliness, but not in this case.

Seven people were injured on Thursday when Greek Orthodox and Armenian priests came to blows in a dispute over how to clean the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem.

Following the Christmas celebrations,

PRIESTS/A8



## WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Northern and Eastern Luzon and Visayas will have cloudy skies with scattered rains. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers or thundershowers.

Metro Manila Partly Cloudy	Palawan Partly Cloudy	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio Partly Cloudy	Palawan Partly Cloudy	Cloudy with Rains
Taguig Partly Cloudy	Palawan Partly Cloudy	Cloudy with Rains
Laos Partly Cloudy	Palawan Partly Cloudy	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone Partly Cloudy	Palawan Partly Cloudy	Cloudy with Rains
Yugayay Partly Cloudy	Palawan Partly Cloudy	Cloudy with Rains
Laos Partly Cloudy	Palawan Partly Cloudy	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan Partly Cloudy	Palawan Partly Cloudy	Cloudy with Rains

# Second FRONT PAGE

E-mail: [pr\\_news@inquirer.com.ph](mailto:pr_news@inquirer.com.ph)Website: [www.inquirer.net/nadon](http://www.inquirer.net/nadon)

**EZ2 FOUR DIGIT**  
 10 1 6 6 7 1  
 (In exact order)  
**MID-DAY SUERTRES** Evening  
 7 2 4 8 7 7  
**MEGALOTTO 6/45**  
 4 13 14 21 36 44  
**P24,119,830.80**

## Talks rife on recall bid vs Panlilio

### Gov's political enemies to launch move next year, say supporters

By Christian V. Esguerra

**SUPPORTERS OF PAMPANGA** Gov. Ed Panlilio believe efforts are underway to oust the priest-turned-politician in the wake of persistent rumors that his enemies are preparing to initiate recall proceedings against him next year.

Panlilio, who broke the stranglehold of traditional politicians on Pampanga by winning the gubernatorial race last May, said he has gotten information the recall move would be based

on his alleged "incompetence." "The word is that I cannot function properly because I don't enjoy the support of the other elected officials in the province," Panlilio said in a phone interview.

According to a member of Catholic-based Ang Kapatiran party, who is a supporter of Panlilio, the initiative was being cooked up by people identified with politicians that the governor had defeated.

Panlilio's win over the incumbent Mark Lapid and candidate

Lilia Pineda was widely considered a miracle considering the immense political clout—and money—that his opponents wielded during the election.

According to Panlilio, of Pampanga's 21 local executives, only San Fernando Mayor Oscar Rodriguez supported him. He said all 14 members of the provincial board, including youth leaders, were opposed to him.

"I am alone so I can't function properly, but the delivery of basic services is in place," he said.

Panlilio said reports of a

looming petition for recall against him surfaced in November, or a month after the distribution of cash gifts to administration allies during a local government affair in Malacañang.

He came out to admit that he had received P500,000 in cash. The money supposedly intended to finance barangay projects under his jurisdiction.

Weeks before the payola controversy, Panlilio had clashed with the provincial board over an ordinance regulating the multi-million-peso quarry oper-

ations in Pampanga. He vetoed the ordinance, but was reversed by the board.

Under his watch, the provincial government collected at least P80.61 million in quarry revenues in 81 working days. The amount reportedly dwarfed the total amount collected under his predecessor.

Panlilio said he has been assured by a civil society group that it would launch a counter-attack should recall proceedings be initiated against him.

He said the group has said it

would also initiate a recall against other provincial officials, from the vice governor down to the town mayors.

Panlilio said he remained hopeful that his conflict with other Pampanga officials would be resolved eventually without any of them having to resort to initiating recall proceedings.

He said he had made "reconciliation initiatives" such as greeting his detractors last Christmas and in a televised affair. "I told them that if I was wrong, I was asking for forgiveness."

## WHAT'S INSIDE

**9 OUT OF 10**  
Pinoys face 2008 with more hope, says new survey

/A16

**SOLDIERS GET**  
warning vs firing of guns to greet the new year

/A5

## Bill pushes health insurance for kids

A SEPARATE GOVERNMENT health insurance for children has been proposed in the Senate.

Sen. Edgardo Angara has filed a bill creating a Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) that would complement the existing National Health Insurance Program (PhilHealth).

Under his bill, CHIP will provide children aged 6 and below with a full range of health services like checkups, immunizations, dental and eye care, and prescription drugs.

Children of indigent parents, meanwhile, would get free health insurance coverage, according to Angara's proposal.

As of December 2006, PhilHealth has 16.2 million members, of which 4.95 million are considered indigents. The program has 62 million beneficiaries, which is 70 percent of the country's population.

"However, there remain 14 million poor children left out in health care delivery," Angara said. Dona Passadugan



TOWN mayors of Zamboanga del Norte and Zamboanga Sibugay join forces as they march Thursday toward the San Ramon Prison and Penal Farm colony to demand the release of convicted child rapist Romeo Jalosjos. **JULIE S. ALIPALA**

## Child rights group chides gov't on special treatment of Jalosjos

By Julie S. Alipala  
Inquirer Mindanao

ZAMBOANGA CITY—A CHILD rights group yesterday called on the government to stop extending special treatment to convicted child rapist Romeo Jalosjos even as some 30 town mayors from the provinces of Zamboanga del Norte and Zamboanga Sibugay staged a rally here demanding the release of the former congressman.

Honey May Suazo, executive secretary of the Davao City-based Kabila Alliance for Children's Concerns in Mindanao, said it was obvious that Jalosjos was being given special treatment inside the San Ramon Prison Farm here.

## Insult to victim

"This is an insult to the victim. It will become a precedent to other prisoners or persons in authority," she said.

Suazo said Jalosjos is a known ally of President Macapagal-Arroyo and the special treatment he is now enjoying has the blessings of the President.

Even when he was still at the National Bilibid Prisons in Muntinlupa, Jalosjos was already being given preferential treatment, she said.

She noted that Jalosjos was in a

separate cell while other inmates were living together in small cells, and "always had time for leisure compared to other convicted criminals."

## Full sentence

Suazo said Jalosjos should serve out the full sentence of his punishment as a child rapist without special treatment.

Jalosjos was convicted in 1997 for the statutory rape of an 11-year-old girl and was sentenced to two life terms. Last April, the President commuted the sentence to 16 years.

Since he had already served 13 years and earned credit for good behavior, prison officials deemed him eligible for release last Dec. 16.

In the face of a public uproar, however, Malacañang blocked the release, saying Jalosjos, 66, still had to apply for pardon when he reaches 70.

On Dec. 22, Jalosjos, who insisted that he was already a free man, walked out of the New Bilibid Prisons in Muntinlupa and flew to Zamboanga del Norte. The escape cost Bureau of Corrections Director Ricardo Daplat his job.

He was rearrested on Dec. 23 and is now held at the San Ramon Penal Farm, about 30 kms from Zamboanga City.

Mayors from the Zamboanga peninsula, many of them allied with Jalosjos, said there was "double stan-

dard" at work in the ex-congressman's continued incarceration.

The mayors, led by Salug, Zamboanga del Norte Mayor Jesus Lim, and wearing black arm bands, yesterday marched to the penal farm.

"Black because we believe that justice is dead and we will adorn our municipal halls with black ribbons and we are also flying the flags in our towns at half mast to symbolize that someone has died and that's our justice," Lim said.

## Protest to continue

Sibuco town mayor Norbi Edding said the protest will continue until Jalosjos is freed.

"We want to show to [Justice] Secretary [Raul] Gonzalez that we are questioning and condemning his decision, the double standard justice and the crippling of the human rights of a person," said Edding, who is the legal counsel of the Zamboanga del Norte Mayors' League.

He said the mayors also passed a resolution in which they agreed that "Jalosjos is already a free man and deserved to be out of jail."

Lim said they were not only fighting for Jalosjos but for other "Filipinos suffering the same fate." With reports from Joselle Badilla and Richel Umel, Inquirer Mindanao

## Duque: Gov't winning war vs poverty

MALACAÑANG HAS RELEASED data showing that government is slowly winning the war on poverty, particularly in the area of hunger, while also admitting that much still has to be done to reach the poorest of the poor.

During the taping on Thursday of the weekly government television show, "The Cabinet Speaks," Health Secretary Francisco Duque enumerated the gains achieved by the Arroyo administration in its overarching goal to defeat poverty in the country.

In "Christmas rice distribution"

alone, 800,000 families benefited, said Duque, who heads the task force on hunger mitigation.

President Macapagal-Arroyo distributed two kilograms of rice plus *noche buena* goods to poor families in 34 provinces throughout the Christmas season, Malacañang said.

In the areas that she did not reach, Cabinet secretaries, along with local officials, took over.

To address hunger, the task force first identified the root cause—lack of or inadequate food.

"The strategy here is to focus on both demand and supply," he said.

On the supply side, government saw the need to increase food productivity and enhance the efficiency of logistics and food delivery.

The government thus identified 54 "food-poor provinces" which became the beneficiaries of antipoverity projects.

The priority areas—where the incidence of hunger is very high—are the Metro Manila, Masbate, Mountain Province, Camarines Norte, Lanao del Norte, Zamboanga del Norte, Zamboanga Sibugay, Maguindanso and Agusan del Norte. **Michael Lim Ubac**

### REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENSE ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES OFFICE OF THE PHILIPPINE NAVY BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE Bonifacio Naval Station, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City

#### Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid Construction of Concrete Pier at Naval Operating Base (NOB) at Batu-Batu, Tawi, Tawi

1. The Armed Forces of the Philippines, through the *Revised-Reprioritized Projects CY 2000 Modernization Fund*, intends to apply the sum as stated below being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the following Philippine Navy Projects. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid Opening.

Nomenclature/ Activity	Approved Budget for the Contract	Date/Time			Price of Bid Documents (non-refundable)
		Submission/ Opening of Eligibility Documents	Pre-Bid Conference	Deadline for Submission/ Opening of	
Construction of Concrete Pier at Naval Operating Base (NOB) at Batu-Batu, Tawi, Tawi	Php 22,750,000.00	January 10, 2008, 9:00 AM	January 18, 2008, 9:00 AM	January 30, 2008, 9:00 AM	Php 9,000.00

2. The Armed Forces of the Philippines now calls for the submission of Letters of Intent (LOIs) from potential Bidders to apply for eligibility for the Construction of Concrete Pier at Naval Operating Base (NOB) at Batu-Batu, Tawi, Tawi. Bidders should possess a valid PCAB license applicable to the above type and cost of the contract, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least fifty percent (50%) of the ABC, and meet the other minimum eligibility requirements stated in the Eligibility Documents. Interested Bidders must submit their LOIs on or before **January 09, 2008** at the Office of the PN Bids and Awards Committee, Bonifacio Naval Station, Taguig City and secure the Eligibility Documents therefrom. Applications for eligibility will be evaluated on a "pass/fail" basis. The last day for the submission of the accomplished Eligibility Documents shall be on the date of the opening of Eligibility Documents: **January 10, 2008, 9:00 AM** at the Office of the PN Bids and Awards Committee. Only those Bidders passing the eligibility check will be entitled to purchase the Bidding Documents.

3. The PN BAC will issue to prospective bidders Eligibility Requirements and Forms at PN BAC Secretariat, Office of the PN Bids and Awards Committee at Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City, upon the submission of a Letter of Intent (LOI), and upon their payment of a non-refundable amount of **Php 300.00 (fee for the Eligibility Requirements and Forms)**. Interested Bidders shall submit their accomplished Eligibility Documents to the BAC Secretariat at the Office of the PN Bids and Awards Committee before **January 10, 2008, 9:00 AM**.

4. Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from Secretariat, Philippine Navy Bids and Awards Committee and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from **0800H - 1700H** on Monday to Friday.

5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by Bidders that passed the eligibility check upon the presentation of the Notice of Eligibility to the BAC Secretariat, at the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the Bidder or his authorized representative.

6. The Armed Forces of the Philippines will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all Eligible Bidders on **January 18, 2008, 9:00 AM** at the Office of the Philippine Navy Bids and Awards Committee, Bonifacio Naval Station, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City.

7. Eligible Bidders must submit their Bids at the address below on or before **January 30, 2008, 9:00 AM**. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in the form and amount specified below.

• **Manager's Check** equivalent to 1% of ABC or **Surety Bond** equivalent to 2.5% of ABC.

Late Bids shall not be accepted. Bid opening shall be on **January 30, 2008, 9:00 AM**. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below.

8. Completion of the Works is required for the One Hundred Fifty (150) Calendar Days.

9. The Armed Forces of the Philippines reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Office of the PN Bids and Awards Committee  
BNS, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City  
Contact Person: **CDR GLICERIO P VILLANUEVA PN**  
Tel Nr: 0917-8599-434 / 0918-2016-522  
Tel Nr: 618-8218, 815-3420, 843-4415 & 815-8093 local 6341

(Sgd.) **ADRIANO V MUNAR JR**  
CAPT PN (GSC)  
Chairman, PN BAC



**By Christian V. Esguerra**

In House Bill No. 1937, Davao Oriental Rep. Thelma Amario is seeking the establishment of "Senior Citizens Wards" in both private and public hospitals specifically for their confinement.

Almario said the allocation of specific wards for the elderly would spare them and their families the trouble of having to

The proposal was another benefit being sought for elderly Filipinos enjoying privileges under the Senior Citizen's Act which include discounts in restaurants and drugstores.

Hospitals participating in the Philippine Medical Tourism Program, for instance, set aside a substantial amount of beds to accommodate foreign patients.

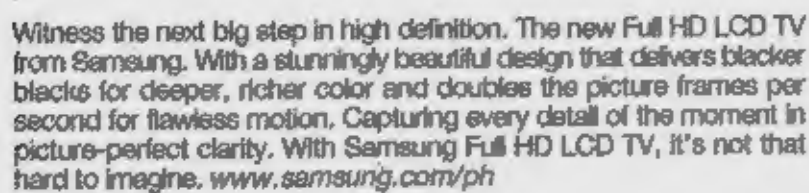
Often, these wards would have better facilities and accommodation than the average hospital rooms.

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# GMA's press office prefers cell phones

From page A1

PANP was initially financed with a P370-million loan from the French government and a P46-million counterpart fund from the Philippines under the RP-French Financial Protocol signed in 1998.

Some P17 million is spent every year for maintenance, including satellite rental, Internet access and salaries of its maintenance personnel.

Planned as early as 1992, the modernization of the government's news and information system spent almost a decade on the drawing board before it became operational in 2001.

But within a year, PANP was in a sorry state.

In 2002, when the Office of the Press Secretary (OPS) moved from Kalayaan Hall in Malacañang to the Arlegui Guesthouse, the PANP equipment had to be hauled off to the other building across the Palace, its fiber-optic cables cut.

For almost three years up to 2005, the PANP equipment, including servers and PABX systems which needed air-conditioned settings, was stashed away, rotting in some OPS stock room while the meter on the foreign loan was ticking.

Then the OPS decided in 2005 not to use the PANP system altogether. It transferred the network to the PIA and the BBS, which the OPS said had better use for the project.

## Obsolete technology

An official of the OPS dismisses the PANP technology as becoming obsolete, and says the office prefers to use the BlackBerry—a handheld wireless e-mail

device—for its communication needs.

In addition to the services given to the PIA and BBS, PANP was originally meant to host the OPS website ([www.ops.gov.ph](http://www.ops.gov.ph)) and the government portal ([www.gov.ph](http://www.gov.ph)) and allow the President to hold video-conferences with the Cabinet, local officials and citizens in remote parts of the country.

Left holding the bag, the PIA and BBS had no choice but to make do with the PANP. Now, PIA officials say the project is functioning but much of the equipment is in disrepair.

But since the technology was proprietary to the French, the purchase of the spare parts needed to repair the facilities and upgrade the video-streaming capability for use by the government's TV station was tied to the expansion of the project.

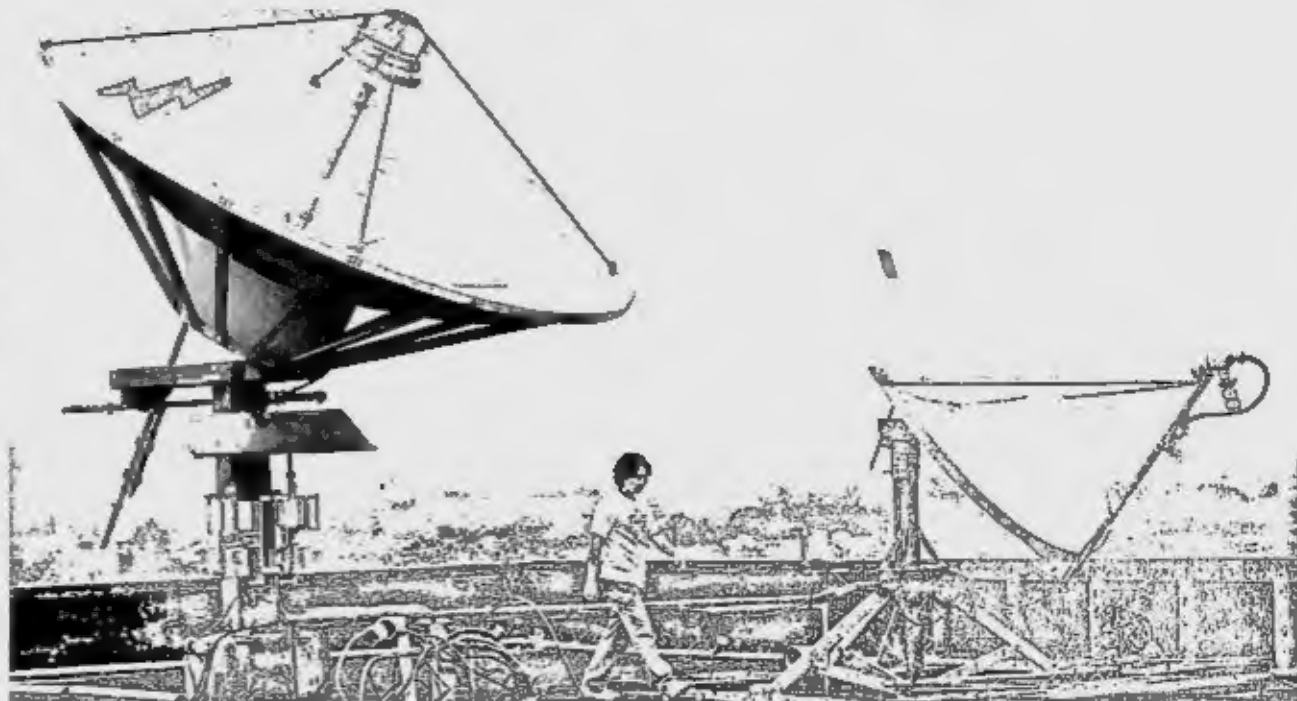
## New loan

As a result, President Macapagal-Arroyo's administration signed last year another P227-million foreign loan from the French government for the PANP with a P50-million local counterpart, bringing the total cost of expansion to P327 million.

In all, P739 million has been plunked down for a system that has been neglected for years.

Even with the fresh infusion of funds, the system has not been utilized as efficiently as envisioned. Bureaucrats say they'd rather use cell phones to communicate.

PIA Director General Conrado "Dodi" Limcaoco admits the project is far from perfect. But he says scrapping it is not an option.



FROM ANALOG TO DIGITAL. Philippine Information Agency's satellite dishes bridge the gap.

JOAN BONDOL

"Is it perfect? No. Are we using it? Yes. Should we sink it and pay for it or use it because we are paying for it? For me, I say use it," Limcaoco says.

## Not a lemon

Limcaoco says PANP is not a lemon, as some of the other broadband systems of government have become.

"This is not a political contract under the Arroyo administration. This was conceived during the Ramos administration, I just inherited it. The way I see it, my role is to see to it that we use it because it's already been obligated. People before me, wiser than me, thought it to be a good project," Limcaoco says.

He says that without the PANP the PIA will go back to faxing its press releases and the Radyo ng Bayan and television stations will not be able to broadcast live.

A briefing paper prepared by Limcaoco and PANP project officers for the Inquirer denies that PANP is a white elephant.

"It has not been fully maximized for various reasons, including equipment depreciation over time, and inadequate maintenance exacerbated by frequent changes in the top management of the

agencies involved," the paper says.

## Victim of mismanagement

Engineer Jojo Nufable, PANP project coordinator, says PANP was a victim of mismanagement in OPS and bureaucratic politics.

"There was mismanagement (of the system) between 2003 to 2005 so the efficiency went down," Nufable says.

Nufable says the equipment depreciated because of lack of proper maintenance at the OPS. The equipment lay idle for years until it was moved to PIA in 2005. He says the fiber optic cables were even cut when the OPS moved out of Kalayaan Hall to Arlegui.

"They thought those were the fiber optics of Erap (former President Joseph Estrada) so they cut them," he says. He says the Presidential Security Group also refused to give permission to dig an underground fiber-optic connection in Malacañang for security reasons.

## Leadership problems

Nufable says changes in OPS leadership also posed a problem for the PANP. He notes that the PANP went through more than nine press secretaries since the Ramos administration.

Nufable says some components of PANP, such as the video-streaming capability, were not availed of when some press secretaries decided to slash the budget for it.

He says the OPS changes also affected the maintenance budget. As a result, he says the efficiency of the system went down from 80 percent to 50 percent over time.

Other officials privy to PANP's operations also point to "lack of technological appreciation" by the present OPS

under Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye.

"(Former Press Secretaries Jess) Siason, Rod Reyes, Silvestre Afable and Ricardo Puno were supportive of this program. But with Secretary Bunye, there is zero appreciation," says a source who declined to be identified for fear of losing his job.

## Bunye prefers cell phones

Bunye, who is also the presidential spokesperson, takes exception to the criticism.

"Actually, it's more of what that project is offering to do (that) has been overtaken by existing technology. Except that according to Dodi (Limcaoco), since we are under the French Protocol, we might as well use it," Bunye says.

"We could accomplish our communications objectives through the regular cell phones," Bunye adds.

Press Undersecretary Robert Rivera explains that PANP was "ceded" to PIA because its technology was becoming obsolete.

## Still using analog

"They were using analog, but we are now digital. So it was my hunch that while it was workable at the time it was proposed, it might be overtaken by digital technology, which is exactly what happened," Rivera says.

Limcaoco, however, says PANP was using digital technology contrary to Rivera's claim. He and PANP coordinators say the technology is advanced because it is satellite-based.

"With the digital age and with some modern tools for communication like the BlackBerry, we feel we can do at the moment with this. (It) is faster, real time and less costly," Rivera says.

# Catanduanes shows ...

From page A1

til private companies took over the facility.

Vereles conceptualized and implemented the barangay cellular telephony project in 1995 as the government was discussing a multibillion-peso communications program to hook up remote villages to the rest of the country.

"The way to go in providing wide coverage of telephony in rural areas was not for government to engage in operating a public Telepono sa Barangay (TSB) project, rather to leverage on the private sector and existing communications technology to do the same thing," Vereles says.

"We simply encouraged existing telecommunications players to enter the province while ensuring them there would be business for them to be gained. Hence, this was a win-win situation," he says.

## Bag-type phones

The government, through the Catanduanes congressional district office, acquired bulky, bag-type cellular phones and distributed them to the barangays.

Knowing that Smart Telecommunications Co. did not want to invest at the time, the government likewise acquired cellular signal extenders to expand coverage, allowing even distant areas like Pandan, 95 km from the capital of Virac, to have a cellular phone service.

In all, the government acquired 365 units of the cellular bag phones at P10,000 per unit and around P2 million per extender connected to the Smart cell site in Virac for a total investment of P11.6 million, or P31,917 per calling station.

The operational cost of the Catanduanes barangay calling stations was negligible as they were installed in *sari-sari* (variety) stores and operated by the family of the store owner, Vereles says. Financing came from his pork barrel allocation.

"Under this strategy, there was a partnership between the public sector and the private sector to put into place the first wide-area cellular coverage, even beating by several years the penetration of cellular tele-

phony in the rest of the Bicol provinces," he says.

Vereles says Globe subsequently came on board.

## White elephant

The TSB project of the Department of Transportation and Communications was a white elephant just waiting to happen because, given the enormous investments to put it in place, it simply could not be privatized to allow the government to recoup its costs, he says. (See second part, *PDI*, Dec. 28.)

"The Catanduanes experience was cheap by any standard," Vereles says.

"When I was in Congress, I would criticize the DOTC project then as the program seemed to run counter to modern-day developmental paradigms in the area of rural telecommunications, considering that the private sector already had a cheaper and more doable alternative," he says.

All the government had to do was partner with the private sector to achieve the same objective, he says.

"What the government did in the Telepono sa Barangay project, to implement and operate the program itself, was so wrong," Vereles says.

## Not without problems

The Catanduanes cellular telecommunications project, however, had its share of problems—from the high cost of calls, which prevented widespread use and limited profits, to weak or even absent signals in some rural barangays.

The concreting of roads leading to the cell sites on top of mountains was also described as a waste of tax money.

The project ended four years after it began, with Vereles' office recalling the bag phones just as Smart began taking over the cell sites for its eventual operation of the island's cellular network.

Nevertheless, the Vereles project prepared the province for the advent of advanced cellular communications, with majority of its 315 barangays now enjoying cell phone services.

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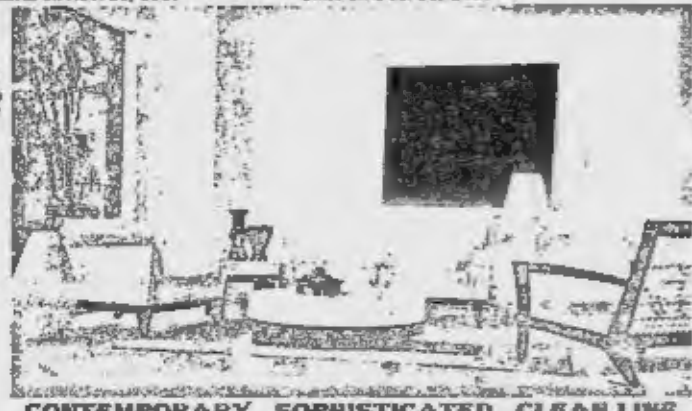
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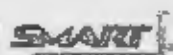
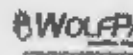
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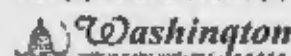
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# Soldiers warned vs firing of guns to greet New Year

By Nikko Dizon

THE ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES (AFP) yesterday warned its officers and men against using their service firearms to welcome the New Year, or face stiff penalties.

Those who will be found guilty of indiscriminate firing could be dismissed from service, said AFP vice chief Lt. Gen. Antonio Romero.

"Our firearms should only be used against armed enemies of the state. To avoid unnecessary loss of life, we must not fire our guns in welcoming the New Year," he said at the ceremonial sealing of service firearms of soldiers at the AFP headquarters in Camp Aguinaldo.

AFP units nationwide have also been ordered to seal their firearms' muzzles.

For good measure, Romero advised those who cannot keep themselves from firing their guns to go to the military camps' firing ranges instead.

## Cracker ban near Naia

Meanwhile, aviation authorities have reminded communities surrounding the airport about the strict ban on firecrackers near the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) complex during the New Year revelry to avoid risking air traffic and passengers.

Airport security chief retired Gen. Angel Arutubo and other Naia security officials recently met with village watchmen in neighboring subdivisions Baltao, Multinational Village, Merville and Moonwalk in Parañaque and Pildira in Pasay City to reiterate the ban on firecrackers.

The ban was primarily intended to protect the strips of approach lights at the north and south edges of the Naia complex. These crucial lights are navigational tools that direct pilots to the runway for landing, Arutubo said.

The Naia has a set of approach lights near the South Luzon Expressway in Sucat and Fort Bonifacio in Taguig City. While placed on

## Sambo; 67

NATIVIDAD NARVAEZ Sambo of Goa, Camarines Sur, died yesterday morning after a lingering illness. She was 67.

She is survived by her children and in-laws Ernie and Leah, Angel and Mark Bender, Homer and Nanette, Ma. Cristina and Romel Dy, and Ma. Lourdes and Felix Magpantay, grandchildren, and sister Nena Inzon.

Her remains now lie in state at their ancestral home in Goa. Interment details will be announced later.

## 'Gunless Week'

INSTEAD OF FIRING GUNS DURING New Year, why not pray?

This was the suggestion yesterday of a group opposed to the use of firearms. Nandy Pacheco, founder of the Gunless Society, told the INQUIRER yesterday that he is calling on the government to declare every New Year's Day celebration as a "Gunless Week."

"Instead of firing their guns indiscriminately, maybe gun owners can just pray and give thanks for the blessings they have received this year," Pacheco said.

He also suggested prayers be said for the "conversion of the country from a violent to a non-violent one, from a killing to a peaceful society."

Alcuin Papa

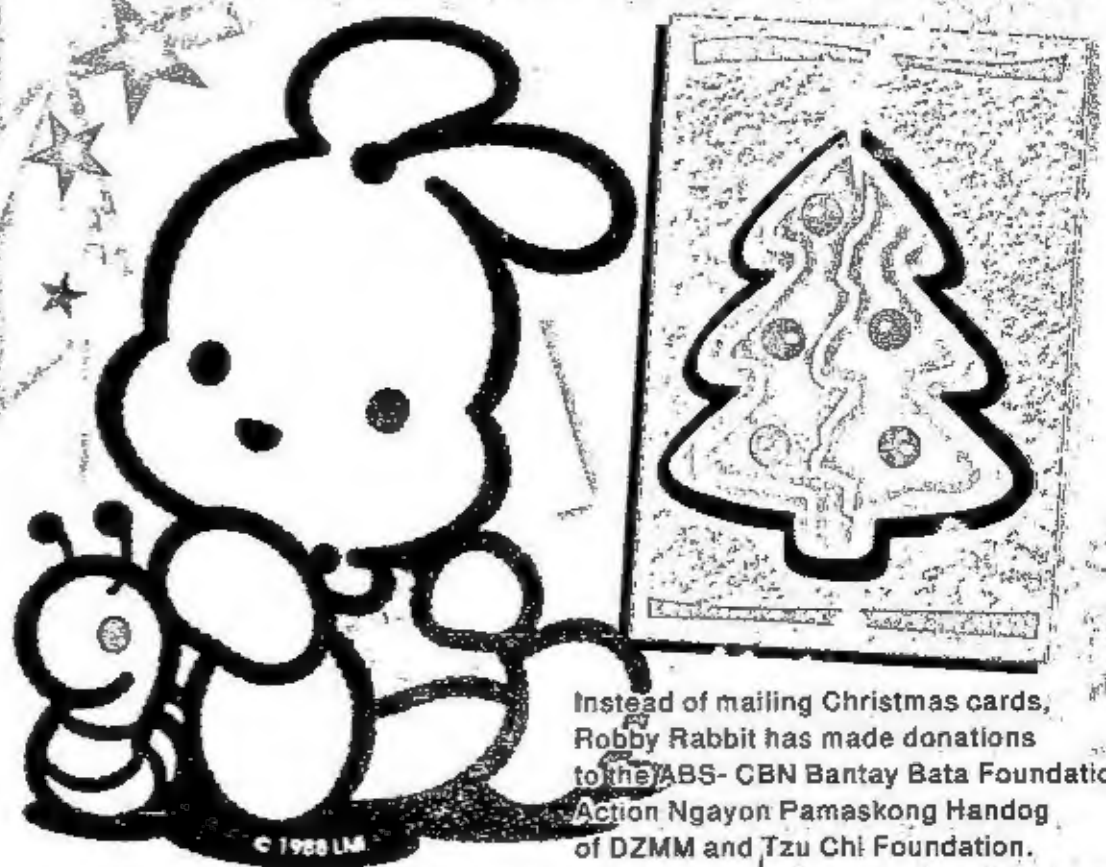
poles nearly as tall as the average lamppost, the lights are deemed vulnerable, especially to rocket-type firecrackers.

"These are guides that pilots use so they can see from above where to land. And there are many neighborhoods surrounding the airport complex, so if somebody lights up a firecracker and it hits the lights, there might be a short circuit and it might shut down the approach lights," said Arutubo.

With a report from Tarra Quismundo

## Holiday Hopes with Robby Rabbit

Robby Rabbit would like to wish our dear loyal customers, business partners, fan club members and most especially our friends a very Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year!



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# Angat level up, water supply assured

By TJ Burgonio

AFTER THE OMINOUS DRY SPELL of several months ago, there is now sufficient water in Angat Dam to last until May next year, the weather bureau said yesterday.

The water level in the reservoir is sufficient to supply the water needs of Metro Manila and irrigate farms in Central Luzon, the Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said.

"There's sufficient water until the rainy season," Jun Borja, supervising weather specialist of Pagasa's flood forecasting branch, said in an interview. "We have no reason to worry about the water supply."

The water level in the dam was at 210.17 meters above sea level yesterday morning, way above the day's

rule curve of 207.31 m.

The rule curve is the elevation of water at which a dam can normally supply water for power generation, domestic use and irrigation.

### Less than normal

For two months beginning in June, Regions 1, 2, 3, the Cordillera Administrative Region and Metro Manila were hit by a dry spell, characterized by less than normal rainfall.

With the dry spell, the water level in major dams in Luzon, including Angat, dipped to way below the critical level. A drought was averted, however, when storms swirled in mid-August, dumping moderate to heavy rains.

Angat Dam supplies 97 percent of the water needs of the estimated 12 million residents of the

metropolis, and most of the irrigation requirements of the farms in Central Luzon.

Borja said that monsoon rains this month helped bring the water level in Angat to a "safe level."

"The amount of rainfall is just equal to the amount of water being released for domestic use and irrigation," he said.

### Scattered rainshowers

The water levels in San Roque Dam in Pangasinan, Binga and Ambuklao dams in Benguet, Magat Dam in Isabela and Pantabangan Dam in Nueva Ecija were slightly lower than their respective rule curves.

But they are at the safe level, Borja said.

The bureau, meanwhile, said the tailend of the cold front will bring

scattered rainshowers to eastern and southern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao beginning today.

Good weather will prevail over the rest of Luzon except for "passing showers," it said.

As the tailend of the cold front moves southward, the eastern and southern parts of Luzon will continue to experience cloudy skies with scattered showers, according to Pagasa's weather outlook in the run-up to the New Year.

Widespread and frequent rains are forecast to fall over Aurora, Quezon and the Bicol region tomorrow, which could trigger flash floods and landslides. Fishermen in the seaboard of Luzon should prepare for moderate to high waves.

Mindanao will have mostly cloudyskies.



Republic of the Philippines  
Office of the President  
Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council  
HOUSING AND LAND USE REGULATORY BOARD

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

RESOLUTION NO. 100  
Series of 2007

### ESTABLISHING A ONE-STOP-SHOP PROCESSING CENTER FOR HOUSING RELATED PERMITS IN THE HLURB

WHEREAS, there is a need to fast track the approval of housing related permits to meet government targets;

WHEREAS, it is proper that there is closer coordination among government agencies which grant housing clearance, permits and licenses;

WHEREAS, under EO 45, Series of 2001 different government agencies involved in the issuance of government related permits are enjoined to comply with specific time periods in the processing and issuance of said clearance, permits and licenses;

WHEREAS, Section 20(b) of RA 7279 provides for the creation of one-stop-shop offices in the different regions of the country for the processing, approval and issuance of clearance, permits and licenses;

NOW THEREFORE, be it resolved as it is hereby resolved that a one-stop-shop center for housing permits shall be established in all the regional offices of this Board in accordance with the guidelines which shall be issued by CEO and the MCA to be entered into among the HUDCC, DENR, DAR, DILG and HLURB.

APPROVED, 12 November 2007, Quezon City.

THE HONORABLE NOLU DE CASTRO  
Vice-President of the Philippines  
HUDCC Chairman

AUGUSTO B. SANTOS  
Director-General, NEDA

ERNESTO L. PINEDA  
Undersecretary, DOJ

AUSTERE A. PANADERO  
Undersecretary, DILG

JOSE L. JACOB  
Undersecretary, DENR

ROMULO Q. FABRE  
Chief Executive Officer and Commissioner

TERESITA A. DESIERTO  
Commissioner

JESUS YAP PANG  
Commissioner

ARTURO M. DUBLADO  
Commissioner

Attested By:  
CHARITO B. LANSANG  
Board Secretary

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

RESOLUTION NO. 110  
Series of 2007

### IMPLEMENTING SECTION 5 OF EO 45 SERIES OF 2001 RELATIVE TO THE SUBMISSION BY THE APPLICANT DEVELOPER OF AN AFFIDAVIT WITH TECHNICAL STUDIES AND DOCUMENTS BY COMPETENT INDIVIDUALS, IN LIEU OF THE REQUIRED CERTIFICATION, CLEARANCE OR PERMIT FOR THE ISSUANCE OF CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION AND LICENSE TO SELL FOR SUBDIVISION AND CONDOMINIUM PROJECTS

WHEREAS, there is a need to expedite the issuance of housing related permits to meet government targets on housing;

WHEREAS, under EO 45 entitled "Prescribing Time Periods for the Issuance of Housing-Related Certifications, Clearances and Permits and Imposing Sanctions for Failure to Observe the Same" more particularly Section 6 prescribes a specific time period to dispose of an application for housing related certification, clearance or permit;

WHEREAS, Section 5 of EO 45 provides that "where the responsible officer of the agencies concerned fails or refuses to dispose of the application within the period prescribed herein, the applicant may, unless expressly prohibited by law, submit an affidavit, with supporting technical studies and documents by competent individuals, in lieu of the certification, clearance or permit";

WHEREAS, the issuance of the Certificate of Registration and License to Sell (CRLS) by this Board can be further expedited if not for the extended delays on the part of the developers to obtain housing related certification, clearance or permit from the concerned government agencies;

WHEREFORE, be it resolved as it is hereby resolved that this Board may accept the applicant developer's affidavit with supporting technical studies and documents by competent individuals, in lieu of the certification, clearance or permit from the concerned government agencies pursuant to Section 5 of EO 45 and proceed to dispose of the application for CRLS.

APPROVED, 12 November 2007, Quezon City.

THE HONORABLE NOLU DE CASTRO  
Vice-President of the Philippines  
HUDCC Chairman

AUGUSTO B. SANTOS  
Director-General, NEDA

ERNESTO L. PINEDA  
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Chief Executive Officer and Commissioner

TERESITA A. DESIERTO  
Commissioner

JESUS YAP PANG  
Commissioner

ARTURO M. DUBLADO  
Commissioner

Attested By:  
CHARITO B. LANSANG  
Board Secretary

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

RESOLUTION NO. 811  
Series of 2007

### RESTORING RESOLUTION NO. R-856, LIMITING JOINT VENTURE DEVELOPMENT PROVISION OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7279 TO THOSE ENTERED INTO BY AND BETWEEN A DEVELOPER AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNIT OR ANY OF THE HOUSING AGENCIES

WHEREAS, the Board, following a study of the various modes of compliance under Section 18 of RA 7279 and a re-examination of its rules implementing said law, finds that restoring the Resolution No. R-856, S. 1999 limiting joint venture agreements to those with the participation of the local government units or any of the housing agencies would result in the production of more socialized housing units, and is more in accord with the letter and intent of the law;

WHEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that Resolution No. R-856, dated 15 December 1999, of this Board, be RESTORED as the same is hereby RESTORED, hereby.

Repealing and restoring projects as a mode of compliance under Section 18 of RA 7279 and a re-examination of its rules implementing said law, finds that restoring the Resolution No. R-856, S. 1999 limiting joint venture agreements to those with the participation of the local government units or any of the housing agencies would result in the production of more socialized housing units, and is more in accord with the letter and intent of the law;

BE IT RESOLVED AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that Resolution No. R-856, S. 1999, of this Board, be RESTORED as the same is hereby RESTORED, hereby.

APPROVED, 12<sup>th</sup> day of November 2007 at Quezon City.

THE HONORABLE NOLU DE CASTRO  
Vice-President of the Philippines  
HUDCC Chairman

AUGUSTO B. SANTOS  
Director-General, NEDA

ERNESTO L. PINEDA  
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Commissioner

JESUS YAP PANG  
Commissioner

ARTURO M. DUBLADO  
Commissioner

Attested By:  
CHARITO B. LANSANG  
Board Secretary

### APPROVING THE FASTTRACKING OF THE ISSUANCE OF CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION AND LICENSE TO SELL

WHEREAS, Executive Order No. 45 prescribes the time periods for issuance of housing related certifications, clearances and permits;

WHEREAS, it further provides that applications for housing related certifications, clearances and permits may be filed simultaneously with the local government units and concerned agencies and that an applicant may submit an affidavit, with supporting technical studies and documents by competent individuals in lieu of certification, clearance or permit;

WHEREAS, after a review of the existing policies of the Board, there appears to be some areas and activities in the existing process which can be done simultaneously to further fast track the processing of application;

WHEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that Section 10, Certificate of Registration of the IRR for PD 957 per Dec. No. 763, S. of 2004 and Section 16 Certificate of Registration of the IRR for BP 220 per Res. No. 764, S. of 2004 be amended to read as follows:

"Section 10. Certificate of Registration.  
After five (5) days from completion of the publication as provided for in Section 9 and upon submission of affidavit of publications executed by the publisher and an affidavit attesting to the posting of the billboard notice on site, the Board shall, in the absence of any impediment, issue a Certificate of Registration upon payment of the prescribed fees."

"Section 16. Certificate of Registration.  
After five (5) days from completion of the publication as provided for in Section 15 and upon submission of the affidavit of publications executed by the publisher, the Board shall, in the absence of an impediment to the registration of the project, issue a certificate of registration upon payment of the prescribed fees."

RESOLVED FURTHER, that one time computation of all fees be allowed and that the process flow for the issuance of certificate of registration and license to sell be revised accordingly.

RESOLVED FINALLY, that this resolution shall take effect immediately, as well as apply to pending applications.

APPROVED, this 12<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2007, Quezon City.

THE HONORABLE NOLU DE CASTRO  
Vice-President of the Philippines  
HUDCC Chairman

AUGUSTO B. SANTOS  
Director-General, NEDA

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Commissioner

Attested By:  
CHARITO B. LANSANG  
Board Secretary

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

RESOLUTION NO. 811  
Series of 2007

### RESTORING RESOLUTION NO. R-856, LIMITING JOINT VENTURE DEVELOPMENT PROVISION OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7279 TO THOSE ENTERED INTO BY AND BETWEEN A DEVELOPER AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNIT OR ANY OF THE HOUSING AGENCIES

WHEREAS, the Board, following a study of the various modes of compliance under Section 18 of RA 7279 and a re-examination of its rules implementing said law, finds that restoring the Resolution No. R-856, S. 1999 limiting joint venture agreements to those with the participation of the local government units or any of the housing agencies would result in the production of more socialized housing units, and is more in accord with the letter and intent of the law;

WHEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that Resolution No. R-856, dated 15 December 1999, of this Board, be RESTORED as the same is hereby RESTORED, hereby.

APPROVED, 12<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2007, Quezon City.

THE HONORABLE NOLU DE CASTRO  
Vice-President of the Philippines  
HUDCC Chairman

AUGUSTO B. SANTOS  
Director-General, NEDA

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Commissioner

Attested By:  
CHARITO B. LANSANG  
Board Secretary

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

RESOLUTION NO. 811  
Series of 2007

## Neri: Move to Finance beyond my ambition

By Jerry E. Esplanada

COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION (CHED) acting chair Romulo Neri yesterday brushed aside talk Malacañang was seriously considering naming him the next finance secretary vice Margarito Teves.

"I think that's beyond my ambitions ... that'll be a miracle," Neri told the INQUIRER.

Neri said he would "just be happy to be allowed to go back to the National Economic and Development Authority after my six-month stint at CHED ends."

### Marching orders

Neri, former socioeconomic planning secretary and budget department head, has marching orders from President Macapagal-Arroyo to "troubleshoot" at the commission up to February 2008.

He took over the CHED on Aug. 16 from Carlito Puno after the latter purportedly failed to aggressively implement the "ladderized" education program of the administration, among other reasons.

Neri had repeatedly said he wanted to finish his assignment at CHED within six months and insisted he had "no ambitions of staying here longer."

Quoting at least two ranking administration officials and the leader of an influen-

tial business group, a member of a presidential education task force, who asked not to be named because he was not authorized to speak, said Neri was a "shoo-in" for the finance portfolio.

The INQUIRER source identified the officials but asked that they not be identified due to the sensitive nature of the issue.

### Reorganization

The same source described the officials as being "among Secretary Neri's friends."

The Office of the President had advised all Cabinet members and other presidential appointees, including officials of government-owned and -controlled corporations and state financial institutions, that a revamp would be under way early next year.

The reorganization of the President's official family is a "continuing thing," according to Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita.

The other day, the President started a year-end performance review of Cabinet secretaries after the Commission on Appointments bypassed yet again several of her appointees.

Ms Arroyo is reportedly considering appointing some losing pro-administration senatorial bets in the last elections to Cabinet positions.

## THE DAILY GOSPEL



Saturday, December 29, 2007  
5th Day: Octave of Christmas  
Thomas Becket

### 1st Reading:

Gospel:

1 Jn 2:3-11

Luke 2:22-35

When the day came for the purification according to the law of Moses, they brought the baby up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, as it is written in the law of the Lord: Every firstborn male shall be consecrated to God. And they offered a sacrifice as ordered in the law of the Lord: a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.

There lived in Jerusalem at this time a very upright and devout man named Simeon; the Holy Spirit was in him. He looked forward to the time when the Lord would comfort Israel, and he had been assured by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before seeing the Messiah of the Lord. So he was led into the Temple by the Holy Spirit at the time the parents brought the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law.

Simeon took the child in his arms and blessed God, saying,

"Now, O Lord, you can dismiss your servant in peace, for you have fulfilled your word and my eyes have seen your salvation, which you display for all the people to see. Here is the light you will reveal to the nations and the glory of your people Israel."

His father and mother wondered at what was said about the child. Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother, "See him; he will be for the rise or fall of the multitudes of Israel. He shall stand as a sign of contradiction, while a sword will pierce your own soul. Then the secret thoughts of many may be brought to light."

### Commentary

If we know Jesus then we obey the commandments. It is simple and straightforward. Do we love God? Then let us keep the Word of God and put it into practice in all ways. This is how we abide in God. We cannot hate or harm, or cause another to fall. We must stand in love, in support and in the light, and we must obey the only commandment: to love one another as our God has loved us in Jesus, unto death if need be.

Joseph and Mary bring the child, their first born, to the temple to be dedicated and given over to the service of God. We have known this moment in our baptisms, when we are sacrificed and given over to God in the power of the Spirit with Jesus. Joseph and Mary hear the words of glory to God from Simeon who has waited so long to see the child who was to come—the Anointed of the Lord. The child has come. And he turns to Mary and to all who give birth to the Word in their hearts/bodies and lives. And he warns us that this child is a sign of opposition and will be the cause of the rise and fall of many—including us. And our hearts will be pierced with a sword—the double-edged sword of the Scriptures—so that the hearts of many can be laid bare and seen for what they are. We are baptized under the sign of the cross and we stand there at the foot of the cross all our days. It is the sign of our salvation and the sign that will be opposed in the world.

Claretian Publications Inc., 8 Mayumi St., UP Village, Diliman, Quezon City, UP Box 4, Diliman, 1101 Quezon City, Tel.: 921-3984; Fax: 921-7429; E-mail: cpi@claret.org; Websites: <http://www.trible.claret.org> (Claretian Publications) & <http://www.claretphilippines.org> (Claretian Missionaries in the Philippines)



## Part DTI-NCR Form no. 457B Series of 2007





**WHO'S SORRY NOW?** Ryan de la Cruz, 5, who was maimed last year by a "crying cow" offers advice to the public: Don't explode anything on New Year's Eve.



**DANGEROUS LINKS.** Iloilo City Police Office Director, Senior Supt. Wesley Barayuga, holds up a chain of assorted firecrackers confiscated from vendors in Molo district.

## Warning to New Year revelers: Look ma, no hands

From page A1

to the tune of Yeng Constantino's "Hawak Kamay (Holding Hands)" but changing the lyrics to "Putol Kamay (Amputated Hand)," recalled how a firecracker known as a "crying cow" injured him and his father on Dec. 31, 2006.

### Prohibited

The young boy happened to be holding on to his father when the firecracker exploded in the latter's right hand.

A "crying cow" is a firecrack-

er that, when lit, emits black smoke and lets out a sound resembling a cow mooing. It is not on the list of prohibited firecrackers under Republic Act No. 7183, which regulates the sale, manufacture, distribution and use of firecrackers.

### Trumpet

Ryan, in an interview, thought that what caused his injury was "lucers," sparklers.

Nevertheless, Ryan cautioned the public against the use of firecrackers. "Wag na

kayo magpaputok ha (Don't explode firecrackers)."

Health Secretary Francisco Duque III reiterated appeals to the public to opt for the far less dangerous but equally noisy homemade horns to welcome the new year.

The DOH has so far reported 103 cases of fireworks-related injuries over an eight-day period (Dec. 21-28). The figure is 68 cases lower than the three-year average for the same period, according to Duque.

The piccolo, five-star and tri-angulo were the most common types of pyrotechnics that the public used last week, DOH data showed.

Duque also called for an amendment to RA 7183 to expand the list of prohibited firecrackers.

At present, the law allows the use and manufacture of pyrotechnics like the baby rocket, silver fountain, bawang, small triangulo and watusi.

The New Year festivities in 2006, however, saw the use of

fireworks such as camara, chickboom, dart bomb and tamba lete, which are not listed in RA 7183.

The DOH is pushing for the gradual phaseout of the use of firecrackers by the public for the New Year celebrations.

### No safe firecracker

Duque said there was no such thing as a safe firecracker.

He said pyrotechnics that were earlier thought to be harmless could cause injury,

particularly to small children. The silver fountain, for example, could also cause burns, he said.

Even the tiny watusi could poison small children when ingested.

There were three reported cases of watusi ingestion in the Dec. 21, 2006-Jan. 5, 2007 period, which involved two children and a 55-year-old adult.

The boga, an improvised cannon made of PVC, is now prohibited by the police but is also not covered by RA 7183.

## Roxas lauds court decision on Manalo brothers' petition

SEN. MANUEL ROXAS II yesterday lauded the Court of Appeals' decision granting the Manalo brothers the remedies they sought in their petition for amparo, saying it was a landmark ruling that asserts judicial authority over rogue military elements who have been responsible for the disappearances and extrajudicial killings of leftist activists.

"The ruling must be upheld and the government must make sure that the defense establishment complies with the documentary evidence being asked by the appellate court," Roxas said in a statement.

Brothers Raymond and Reynaldo Manalo were allegedly abducted by soldiers under Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan on Feb. 14, 2006, and were detained for 18 months until their escape.

In its decision, the appellate court directed Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro and Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon to give the court and the brothers the "official and unofficial reports" of the investigation conducted in connection with the case, as well as medical reports, records and charts of any treatment

or medicine given to the brothers.

### Medical report

The release of the medical report was in connection with Raymond's allegation that Palparan, then chief of the Army's 7th Infantry Division, made him take a drug that made him more open to suggestion, and the court's finding that the brothers were tortured and their wounds treated to cover up their injuries.

The court also ordered the military to confirm in writing the present places of assignment of M/Sgt. Rizal Hilario and Donald Caigas, who were among those the brothers earlier said were involved in their abduction.

Roxas said this was an opportunity for the administration to prove its commitment to the rule of law and to correct a grave injustice committed against citizens.

The militant rights group Karapatan (the Alliance for the Advancement of People's Rights) also welcomed the court ruling.

"This is encouraging news. We hope this will pave the way toward bringing the 'Butcher of Mindoro,' his cohorts and others of their kind, to face the bar

of justice," said Karapatan secretary general Marie Hilao-Enriquez, referring to Palparan, now retired.

The appellate court said Palparan at least knew of his men's abduction and detention of the Manalo brothers.

The court said this showed his "command policy" of encouraging the arrest of civilians without due process and sufficient basis.

### Options

After getting a favorable court decision, the brothers have the option of filing criminal charges against the military officers, including Palparan, found to have participated in their abduction and detention, according to the brothers' lawyer Theodore Te.

Te said Reynaldo and Raymond could also decide to just get back to their regular lives. In either case, the decision would be up to them, he said.

"One option is to sue, but it's not for us to decide. Our clients will decide," Te said. "Another option is for them to try to resume their normal lives, as normal as it can get."

He said he would meet with his clients soon to discuss their next step after the Court of Appeals ruled on their amparo pe-

tition and directed the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the defense department to produce reports about the brothers.

He and the other lawyers handling the Manalo case are also still waiting for the official copy of the court decision before deciding on other legal options.

Enriquez said Karapatan would continue its support of other victims and heirs in filing charges and monitor those pending in different forums here and abroad.

### Day of reckoning

Human rights lawyer Edre Olalia, who is handling for Karapatan another case of political killing that allegedly involved Palparan, said "the day of reckoning is forthcoming" for the controversial retired military official.

"The Court of Appeals decision only validates what the victims and human rights organizations have been saying all along. Eventually, the ax will fall on him," Olalia told the Inquirer in a phone interview.

The lawyer said Palparan and other military officials allegedly involved in killings and disappearances would soon be easier to go after once

Congress and the Supreme Court define the principle of command responsibility in criminal cases.

### Eden Marcellana

Olalia said a case was pending in the Office of the President regarding the killing of human rights activist Eden Marcellana and peasant leader Eddie Gumanoy in Oriental Mindoro in 2003 that may finally "pin down" Palparan and his aides.

The Department of Justice had refused to come out with an indictment so the families of the victims appealed the ruling with Malacañang last May.

"If the government is serious in stopping the political killings, it should push through with this case where the suspects are credibly implicated," Olalia said.

### Missing UP students

In the amparo petition for two missing UP students (Sherlyn Cadapan and Karen Empeno), Raymond had testified that he learned from Sherlyn that she was raped by three men, including Caigas.

"It's time that Palparan, Hilario, Caigas and other elements of the military death squads be made to pay for their crimes," Enriquez said.

Aside from the Marcellana-

Gumanoy killings, the three had also been implicated in the murder of Bayan Muna leader Edilberto Napoles and frustrated murder of activist Ruel Landicho in Mindoro on May 28, 2002.

### Other cases

There is also the case of former security guard Oscar Leuterio, 49, who filed administrative and criminal charges against Palparan before the Ombudsman in November 2006.

Leuterio said he was abducted on April 17, 2006, in Doña Remedios Trinidad, Bulacan. He had testified in court for a habeas corpus petition and said that Palparan talked to him to make sure he was on the military's side. He said he was tortured and illegally detained until he was released in September the same year.

Enriquez said Caigas had earlier been previously arrested on another charge but was able to post bail immediately. And while the previous cases against him were pending, he was reportedly sent by the Philippine government to Haiti as part of the Philippine expedition there and is said to head a new unit in the military. *Reports from Dona Passibugan, Leila B. Salaverria and Jerome Aning*

## Palparan to PDI: I have record of good results

From page A1

ers were abducted on Feb. 14, 2006, from their home in San Ildefonso by Palparan's men, and detained at various places until their escape.

Talking of the media in general, Palparan said: "You are not used to discussing the good news."

### Bigger story

The "bigger story" should be about the "people's gains," "good and real results" and "good effects" from the counterinsurgency efforts and "not my being accused of abducting

and killing people," he said.

The Inquirer, however, has reported on the creation and role of barangay defense systems, the progress that the military has claimed to have gained, and the so-called partnerships that some local governments have developed with the military and the police in undertaking socioeconomic projects to address the communist insurgency.

Militant groups have called Palparan, who retired on Sept. 11, 2006, a "berdugo" (butcher) for the series of human rights violations in areas where

he had been assigned.

In Central Luzon where he served his last stint as commander of the Army's 7th Infantry Division for a year until September 2006, Palparan said the military had freed businessmen and local governments from the control of the New People's Army, the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines.

### Insurgency-free areas

This happened after government forces flushed out the communist rebels in areas that they had controlled or influ-

enced, he said.

Palparan said among the insurgency-free areas in Central Luzon were Doña Remedios Trinidad, San Miguel, San Ildefonso, San Rafael, Calumpit and Malolos City in Bulacan; Lupao, Cuyapo and San Jose City in Nueva Ecija, and Mexico, Lubao and Minalin in Pampanga.

"You won't hear anymore of reports about extortion and killings," he said of those towns and cities.

"Denunciations" by residents of the rebels are hardly reported in the media, he noted.

In his view, some military officers contributed to the one-sided media reports as well.

"What they often tell the media is how many rebels they have killed, how many guns they have seized, how many encounters they had," Palparan said.

### Mindoro also 'liberated'

The island of Mindoro, where he was chief of the 204th Infantry Brigade from 2001 to 2002, had also been "liberated," he said.

"Before my entry, the two provinces (Occidental and Ori-

ental Mindoro) were almost governed by the communists and the NPA. Majority of the local officials, businesses, local police in the towns were under NPA and militants' control, particularly Bayan Muna people," Palparan said.

"Peace and order and security were so bad. Threats, abductions, killings and attacks on people and establishments were rampant. Government projects and businesses were extorted," he said.

Palparan's stint in Mindoro was also marred by killings and abductions of activists.

## Priests slug it out, break peace in little town of Bethlehem

From page A1

Greek Orthodox priests set up ladders to clean the walls and ceilings in their part of the church, which is built over the site where Jesus Christ is believed to have been born.

But the ladders encroached

on space controlled by Armenian priests, according to photographers who said angry words ensued and blows quickly followed.

For a quarter of an hour bearded and robed priests exchanged fistcuffs and even used brooms and iron rods while photogra-

phers who had come to take pictures of the annual cleaning ceremony recorded the whole event.

### Shared holy sites

A dozen unarmed Palestinian policemen were sent to try to separate the priests, but two of

them were also injured in the unholy melee.

"As usual the cleaning of the church after Christmas is a cause of problems," said Bethlehem Mayor Victor Barasheh told AFP, adding that he has offered to help ease tensions.

"For the two years that I have been here everything went more or less calmly," he said. "It's all finished now." The Church of the Nativity, like the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem's Old City, is shared by various branches of Christianity, each of

which controls and jealously guards a part of the holy site.

The Church of the Nativity is built on the site where Christians believe Jesus was born in a stable more than 2,000 years ago after Mary and Joseph were turned away by an inn. *AFP*



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## Deepening crisis

**T**HE DAY SHE CAME HOME LAST OCTOBER, after spending eight years in exile, former Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto was immediately the target of an assassination attempt. The bombings—employing a human bomb, followed by a car bomb—killed 139 of her supporters, but left her safe if shaken. But last Thursday, an assassin got her, with two shots, after a campaign sortie in Rawalpindi. A human bomb set off after the shooting killed 15 other people.

### EDITORIAL

Bhutto had many enemies who probably wanted her dead, but al-Qaida is the primary suspect, since it is believed to have profited most from it. Bhutto had vowed to crush the international terrorist group if she would gain power and deny them the sanctuary in Pakistan that she had accused President Pervez Musharraf of tolerating. Her death writes finis to a power-sharing arrangement with Musharraf that could have stabilized Pakistan and strengthened his resolve to drive al-Qaida and the Taliban out of the country. Her death also undermines public trust in Musharraf and his government.

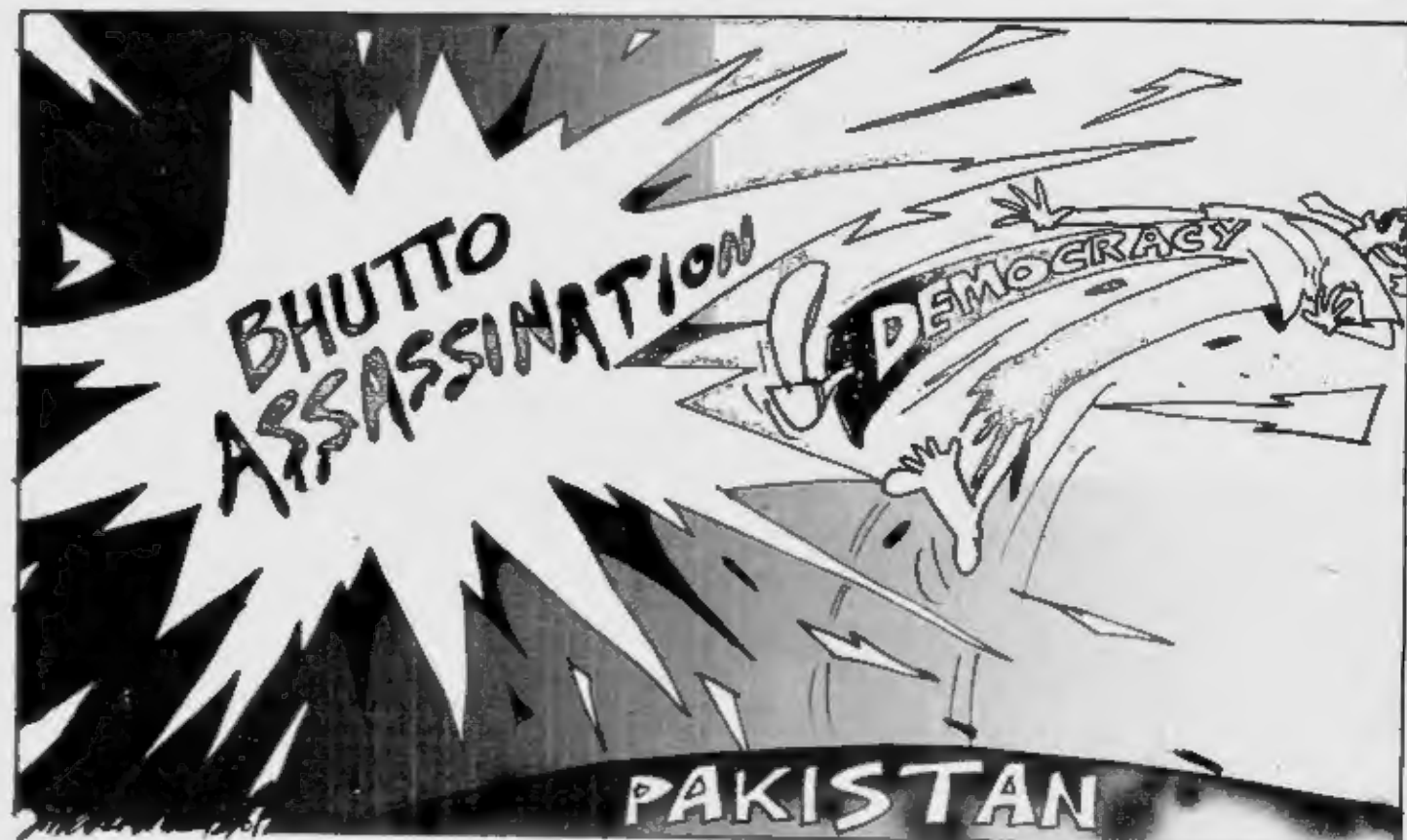
Bhutto, however, had said in a letter to a friend that Musharraf should be held responsible should anything bad happen to her. She had complained about the half-hearted measures to provide security despite the earlier attempt on her life, including the reduction of the police presence outside her home, as well as the lack of progress in the investigation of the earlier incident. She criticized in particular the rejection by the government of offers of assistance from Scotland Yard and the US Federal Bureau of Investigation, hinting that the government might have something to hide. In a commentary she wrote for CNN, Bhutto charged that some elements in the Musharraf government were supporting Islamic extremists. "My return to my country poses a threat to the forces of extremism that have thrived under the dictatorship," she wrote. "They want to stop the restoration of democracy at any price."

Democracy may have to wait a little while more. Although parliamentary elections have been scheduled for Jan. 8, the chances that they would be a truly democratic exercise have faded. Bhutto's party, which is the biggest in Pakistan, has been left leaderless by her death. Another major opposition leader, former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, has announced that his party would boycott the elections. With opposition parties either in disarray or pulling out completely, the elections would be a farcical exercise.

But Musharraf cannot postpone the elections for too long, without risking the possibility that the situation would spin out of control. Riots have erupted in several cities as Bhutto's supporters gave vent to their grief, anger and frustration. With Pakistan now engulfed by what some analysts regard as the most serious crisis in its history, Musharraf may be tempted to declare emergency rule and crack down on his enemies. That could, in turn, spark more protests and violence, building up to a situation that political extremists could exploit to gain leverage if not seize power altogether, the last thing the world would want to see happen in a country with nuclear bombs. Which would all hand a great victory to the terrorists that killed Bhutto.

Musharraf is thus faced with the twin—and nearly impossible—tasks of trying to placate Bhutto's angry supporters and moving the democratization process forward. To achieve the first, it is essential that those behind the assassination are identified by a credible investigating body and brought to justice, if possible. Then, Musharraf should do whatever is necessary to create the most favorable conditions for the conduct of fair and honest elections as soon as possible.

Musharraf can use the crisis as an excuse to crack down harder on his foes, even as his rivals exploit the explosive situation to try to bring him down. Or they can come together and help each other in healing the divisions that find expression in political violence and tragic assassinations. The crisis in Pakistan requires the highest statesmanship from its leaders, not political brinkmanship.



## Rizal's 'Indolence of the Filipinos'

WRITING IN 1890 FOR LA SOLIDARIDAD, Jose Rizal takes up the question of the so-called "indolence" of the Filipinos. This claim, he argues, had allowed the Spanish colonial authorities to excuse their own "stupidities," and the friars to "make themselves irreplaceable." We should not be content to simply deny it, he says. We must "examine the question calmly with all the impartiality of which a man is capable who is convinced that there is no redemption unless based solidly on virtue."

This masterly exercise in deconstruction is Rizal's most sociological and most compelling essay. Here is an exposition of the social theory underpinning the "Noli." Rizal approaches his subject the way a modern scientist would, but in addition, he deploys all the metaphors at his disposal as a trained physician in order to add satirical force to his arguments. He looks at the behavior typically associated with the predisposition to indolence, and proceeds to analyze the context in which it is bred.

The charge of indolence is hardly heard nowadays, for indeed the Philippines has become one of the main sources of the world's nurses, domestic helpers, caregivers, seafarers, construction workers, musicians, entertainers, teachers, call center agents, etc. Yet, Rizal's analysis remains valid to this day. The lack of advancement among our people is still, as in Rizal's time, largely attributable to defects in their education and the lack of national

We all know about the underdeveloped state in which our educational system languishes. And yet we have only focused on the impoverished state of existing facilities and the miserable test scores of our pupils. We have not even begun to look at the kind of human beings our schools are producing, which is what bothered Rizal most. "The very limited home education, the tyrannical and sterile education in the few educational centers, the blind subjection of youth to his elders, influence the mind not to aspire to excel those who preceded him and merely to be content to fol-

### PUBLIC LIVES

Randy David



low or walk behind them. Stagnation inevitably results from this, and as he who devotes himself to copying fails to develop his inherent qualities, he naturally becomes sterile; hence decadence."

It is this resignation resulting from mental stagnation that preoccupied Rizal. He pursues this theme in his discussion of the Filipino's lack of national sentiment. The absence of any concern for the nation, he says, "breeds another evil, which is the scarcity of any opposition to the measures that are prejudicial to the people and the absence of any initiative that will redound to their welfare. A man in the Philippines is only an individual; he is not a member of a nation." Where there is no sense of nation, there can be no collective striving to develop the country.

Today it is not indolence but lack of discipline that is blamed for the Filipino's lack of progress. Like the claim of indolence, however, this supposed unruliness is used to explain many problems and justify the quest for dictatorial rule. It would not be enough to deny this lack of discipline, for indeed anyone can point to everyday manifestations of this annoying trait. Our chaotic city traffic and the countless remedial measures it provokes appear to be its most palpable expression. Every failed treatment only seems to highlight the terminal nature of the malady.

Following Rizal's method, we might however shift our focus from the symptoms to the social context. Why do Filipinos not follow rules? Why do they not fall in line and wait for their turn? Why do they turn to influential persons or patrons to obtain access to public services

and institutions? There are two basic reasons, I believe. The first is ignorance, and the second is distrust of the system.

Many Filipinos do not follow the rules because they don't know them, or if they do, they don't know how they are supposed to work. It's easy to say ignorance excuses no one, but shouldn't the first duty of government be to explain the laws to its citizens, their logic and justification? In the absence of such learning, people will improvise or stick to habit.

But the more important reason for lack of discipline is distrust of the system. It is the belief that following the rules gets you nowhere. If you fall in line, you may wait forever; others will find a way to get ahead of everyone. The idea is to devise your own trick, or to find a fixer you can pay or a powerful person whose influence you can tap in order to quickly get what you want. The assumption is that the system doesn't work, and is not meant to work.

Looking at our social reality today, one finds that this way of thinking is not too far off the mark. Our system of rules does provide discretionary powers to some people—powers essential to a social order based on large gaps in wealth and privilege, and on layers of dependence and patronage. In such a system, corruption is only the other face of patronage, a vital ingredient in the highly unequal society we have.

This kind of society is becoming obsolete in the modern world. To prolong its life, pre-modern elites who run government are resorting to authoritarianism, while the citizens who cannot stand living in it are fleeing. But, because we too are evolving as a society, there is hope. Education and migration are releasing many Filipinos from ignorance and bondage. "Peoples and governments are correlated and complementary," says Rizal. "A stupid government is an anomaly among a righteous people, just as a corrupt people cannot exist under wise rulers and laws."

Comments to [public.lives@gmail.com](mailto:public.lives@gmail.com)

## Asia's Latin America

### COMMENTARY

Isabel T. Escoda

not many folks choose the Philippines for their vacations, even preferring Bali despite its having experienced a terrorist bombing.

I had joined the polemic by rebutting a letter which made the outrageous claim that Hong Kong employers need to be defended from their Filipina maids. The writer cited the case of a local pop star who had hired and fired 21 Pinays over the past three years (one of whom was jailed after he took her to court for having purloined some of his photographs). She urged the government to pass a law protecting local employers both from dishonest and incompetent foreign maids, adding that the pop star was entitled to fire any number of Pinays if their work was sloppy.

This was plainly absurd, in the context of the history of maltreatment which too many domestic faces in the territory, since they're usually the ones needing protection from abusive employers. The fact that the Hong Kong government refuses to pass an anti-discrimination law shows that domestics are viewed as undeserving menials. Furthermore, they're banned from acquiring residency, no matter how long they have lived here. All other foreigners not engaged in domestic work automatically acquire residency after a seven years' stay.

In my letter I had used the term "slavery," particularly since various reports show that human trafficking syndicates have been using Hong Kong as a transit point, sometimes even as a base. Another Hong Kong woman attacked my slavery charge by claiming that maids get a better deal here than they do in Malaysia and Singapore, where wages are lower and weekly days off are seldom granted. Filipinas shouldn't think they're so great, she stated, just

because they speak English, adding that they should go home if they're unhappy about local working conditions.

Still another correspondent jeered, "Escoda's sour-graping (sic) will not help improve the standing of Filipino maids in Hong Kong.... Indonesians have out-competed Filipinos in all sectors, not just in the maids market, commanding respect from consumers in both the developed and developing countries. Where are the Filipino products?"

Despite the non sequitur, she may have scored a point since surveys show that Indonesian domestics (who are required to learn Cantonese before they are shipped to Hong Kong) are predicted to outnumber Pinays in a year or two. In fact, local government clinics these days display information leaflets starting first with Bahasa, followed by Tagalog and then Thai.

As for the letter-writer's point about the absence of our exports, indeed one doesn't find quality Philippine-made products like textiles, appliances, foodstuff, household goods in the various commodities from the other Southeast Asian countries.

All this confirms what a few perspicacious commentators in Manila have decried: that genuine industrialization has eluded the Philippines, thanks to the wrong-headed policies of past and present, inept and corrupt administrations. And so we have fallen back to being a mere service economy, with our major export being warm bodies, particularly female ones.

A British friend once asked me why such a "sweet" people as the Filipinos seem always to have such rotten governments. With the country adrift and viewed as an Asian Latin America, perhaps the banana republic label will morph into a "mango republic"—signifying the sweet, sometimes sour, fruit which sadly does tend to rot.

Isabel T. Escoda is a longtime Hong Kong resident who has been writing about migrant workers in Asia.

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## Statistics for justice

## SOCIAL CLIMATE



## Mahar Mangabas

getting richer only occurs when the process by which they get there assists the have-nots at the same time.

What is the meaning of a "have-not"? This very term indicates that there are some people who lack access to a critical minimum that is regarded as fair and just by the society as a whole. This minimum could be expressed, for instance, by a poverty line. (However, it should be a poverty line that is fair in the eyes of the people, and not merely a line that is declared official by the government. An institution that merely pretends to abolish poverty, by manipulating its official definition, cannot long endure. The schema of Rawls/Diokno envisions the existence of strong and stable institutions to promote distributive justice.)

For economic statistics in particular, this means that: (a) Statistics about the numbers of the poor and the depths of their poverty matter above all, at all times. (b) Statistics about growth in per capita Gross National Product (GNP) or in average income matter only to the extent that such growth is actually shared with the poor.

Forget averages and variances. Those who have taken elementary statistics will recall that the most common computations from a statistical distribution of numbers are its mean (or average) and its variance (the average of squared deviations from the mean). These are intended to summarize the entire distribution, all the way from the smallest numbers to the largest ones.

However, when the numbers refer to conditions experienced by individuals, the Diokno definition of social justice is only concerned with the

relatively small numbers, where the poor or have-nots are clustered. The average (which is what each individual would enjoy if the distribution were equal) and the variance (which can be thought of as "the gap between the rich and the poor") do not matter in themselves, in the sense that a new distribution with a higher average and/or a lower variance would not indicate an improvement in justice unless at least some of the smaller numbers are simultaneously raised to whatever is the critical minimum.

In particular, the figure of GNP divided by the population is a simple average that only refers to what each person would enjoy assuming equal sharing of production. An increase in this average is not acceptable as evidence of an increase in what each person actually enjoys. It would signify growth in productive efficiency, but not in distributive justice. In the schema of Rawls/Diokno, the principle of justice has priority over the principle of efficiency.

In short, "trickle-down" must be directly measured and not merely assumed. When trickle-down is unproven, GNP growth has no meaning for social progress.

Statistics on health have a better sense for justice. Interestingly enough, it is standard statistics on health, rather than statistics on the economy, that do better in observing distributive justice.

The infant mortality rate and the child mortality rate are good statistical indicators because these problems affect the poor much more than the rich. Their negative phrasing is quite proper. A country with a terrible infant mortality rate of 10 percent would only fool itself by dubbing it as an "infant survival rate" of 90 percent, as though this was already close to 99 percent survival.

Happy New Year—to the poorest first, and then to others too!

Contact SWS: [www.sws.org.ph](http://www.sws.org.ph) or [mahar.mangabas@sws.org.ph](mailto:mahar.mangabas@sws.org.ph)

## Looking to 2008

## COMMENTARY

## Eugenia Duran-Apostol

braries are scarce. As such, the literate environments of many schools are very far from ideal.

And then there is the dropout rate, which remains at rather alarming levels from Grade 1 to Grade 3, ironically a very critical stage in the education cycle. Former Education Undersecretary Mike Luz says that nutrition—or the lack thereof—has a lot to do with the dropout rate. "The kids just aren't strong enough," says Luz.

But we have much to look forward to in 2008. People like Neni Sta. Romana Cruz and groups like Sa Aklad Sisikar Foundation and the Philippine Board of Books for Young People have been hard at work all these years to get more and better books for children. More importantly, groups like this have made it their mission to help children develop a genuine love for reading.

Many corporate foundations, church organizations and civic groups have embarked on school-feeding programs to help ease the nutrition problems of very young pupils.

Other businesses, like Hongkong and Shanghai Bank Philippines, for example, are taking a more direct approach by organizing "Read-With-Me" programs where their own employees volunteer a part of their work time to help public school children learn to read.

A Basic Education Sector Reform Agenda (Besra) has already been in place for some time. It defines the national government's priorities for education, together with the Governance in Basic Education Act (RA 9155).

The FWPP encourages all friends of the Education Revolution and everyone who wants to help improve public education to use Besra and Republic

Act 9155 as guides to making education plans and organizing local school community alliances.

In fact, RA 9155 specifically mandates principals and school heads to actively assume instructional and administrative leadership over their school community. This law clears the way for the formation of local education alliances made up of the school, the parents, community residents, local business, NGOs and the local government.

Increasingly, partnerships have been emerging between DepEd regional directors and schools division superintendents and local chief executives to discuss and arrive at solutions to the learning needs of their constituencies. This is very evident in perennial NAT top performer Eastern Visayas under regional director Sol Matugas.

On the national level, major business groups like the Philippine Business for Education, the League of Corporate Foundations and the Philippine Business for Social Progress have—as a matter of policy—made education improvement a key result area of their corporate social responsibility programs. In fact, these huge organizations and NGOs like Synergeia, FWPP and the Ateneo Center for Education Development are now part of the 57-75 Movement, a private sector initiative that presents a multi-faceted approach to address public education issues.

This movement's community mobilization teams—guided by Joel Pagsanghan, FWPP's co-consultant—can be found in six pilot sites namely, Pampanga, Nueva Vizcaya, Iligan City, Negros Occidental, Iloilo City and Guimaras. Mario Desiquito of the Ayala Foundation heads 57-75 and he says that organization work in these areas is well underway.

From all these, 2008 promises to be a very exciting year for the Education Revolution.

Eugenia Duran-Apostol is the Foundation for Worldwide People Power's founding chair. E-mail comments to [eugeniaduranapostol@gmail.com](mailto:eugeniaduranapostol@gmail.com)

## Fireworks at the Palace

## BETWEEN DEADLINES



gave a presentation on the achievements of the Arroyo administration in the so-called war against poverty. It turned out that Duque had been asked by the Palace to also present a year-end report on the government's anti-hunger program.

After some time, UNTV reporter Freema Salonga, who co-hosted the show with Press Undersecretary Martin Crisostomo, asked about "plans for the coming 2008," apparently to speed up the discussion. But Flores retorted that she had yet to finish reporting on 2007 targets.

Duque continued to talk about the tug of war between "supply and demand," even huffing about the role of calamities and dry spells on food productivity. Exasperated MPC members began making side comments during the "live" taping, which promptly caught Crisostomo's attention.

"*Asan ang paputok?*" complained reporter Belia Canasno, expecting the usual report on casualties during the Christmas revelry.

On the receiving end of dagger looks from other MPC members, Crisostomo moved to cut short Duque, very politely. He said talking about the nitty-gritty of the anti-poverty program could last up to 2009. "Secretary, maybe it's time to give them warning [on the use of fireworks, etc.]"

Duque finally relented. "*Palagay ko, mainit na mainit na sila. They want to know the number of victims of fireworks,*" he said.

The health chief reported 87 firecracker-related cases from Dec. 24 to 27, including one victim of a stray bullet.

Although the figure was 30 percent lower (38 cases) compared to the total in the same

period last year, Duque called on Filipinos to shun firecrackers and other pyrotechnic devices during the New Year's revelry. He noted that children were the usual victims (who, with missing fingers, can no longer count properly), apart from drunk men who use cigarettes to light up firecrackers.

"In our desire to drive out bad spirits, let's spare our fingers," he quipped, eliciting chuckles from the crowd composed mostly of members of MPC and RTVM.

OUT OF UNIFORM. The police and the military have been making a fuss about the Magdalo boys disguising themselves as members of media in the aftermath of the Peninsula Manila caper. But what about the police and military intelligence operatives at the Peninsula who carried fake press cards?

Ellen Tordesillas of Malaya said she saw one police colonel in civilian clothes mingling freely with the journalists at the hotel lobby at the height of the Nov. 29 stand-off. Tordesillas said the officer, who is her personal friend, is assigned to PNP intelligence.

A former police agent said he recognized an operative from the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (Isafp) from the TV coverage of the stand-off. The agent said the Isafp operative was also among the 14 Isafp agents from the infamous Isafp unit MIG 21, who were involved in the controversial "Heio Garcia" scandal at the Manila Pen, however, the "wire-tapper" was posing as a medic.

BLAST FROM THE PAST. From the Dec. 17, 1987 issue of the Philippine Daily Inquirer—

When "ambushed" recently by *Maasikang* reporters, Defense Secretary Rafael Ueto patiently answered queries on how captured putsch leader Gregorio Honasan would be treated. Just like the rest who had been captured earlier, Ueto said. The naughty journalists then candidly asked "Rocky" if indeed, the raid was "stage-managed." Ueto just shook his head, grinned and scolded them: "*Kaya talaga, ang imagination ninyo... napaka...*"

## Giant-lantern effect

WHEN DOES A LANTERN BECOME MORE THAN AN EYE candy? When it's put together by meticulous hands and perfectly crafted, when three to four people are needed just to light it up, and when it brings back your fondest memories.

If you love food and happen to visit Pampanga, the province's giant lanterns will be the next best thing after sizzling. But, unlike the pork rump-and-cheek sizzler, the *parul* (as we call it) gives a feeling of nostalgia. Sizzling is everywhere in Pampanga, and so is the *parul*. But, just the sight of the *parul*, especially when lit on a cold December night, makes you think of Christmas and all its commercial drawbacks when you were young.

(Sisig can have the same effect, but when I smell fumes from the coals used to grill the pork, it reminds me of, well, sisig. And that's all there is to it.)

It was a windy Friday night when I went to see our *barangay's* entry to this year's *Ligligan Parul* (Giant Lantern Festival). I hastily gobbled down my *adobo* rice to rush to Esael Supermarket's parking lot, where the *parul* was. Forget about dyspepsia. I was just in time for the ceremonial lighting of the giant *parul*. I got there, bloated but definitely ready for a feast for my eyes.

And memories began seeping in as the lights danced—with the "Papaya" song in the background.

I was raised in a my-father-is-an-OFW kind of family drama. My mother is an Ilocana. Which, for me, meant wearing the same uniform in elementary for six years, having a P10 daily allowance in high school when my classmates' allowance had been upgraded to P50, and wearing a girly gown with a not-so-*terno* rubber shoes. Either we couldn't afford to buy new shoes for the gown, or new casuals for the rubber shoes.

Mama was so frugal, and I couldn't see the logic of it then. This cost-cutting drama usually ran the whole year, until just before Christmas. Mama made me believe in Santa Claus and the baby dolls I allegedly got from him. She said she couldn't afford to buy me gifts, so Santa would just buy them for me. But there was always a catch: Santa could only grant one Christmas wish, and I must not exceed that number, lest I be blacklisted next Christmas.

Mama also made sure our *noche buena* was a three-course dinner, always lavish (or that's what I thought it was then). Unlike others, we didn't have *hamon* (the star of the *noche buena* feast, according to one TV ad) or *keso de bola*, which was just rounded cheese to me anyway. We had party food instead: spaghetti, hordogs and chicken!

And, there was always left-over food post-Christmas. That was a must; I didn't want anything else served on my birthday, which was the following day. And oh yes, the baby doll gift from Santa was both a Christmas and a birthday gift.

It was also on Christmas that I'd get to see our Christmas tree all aglow the whole evening. Mama didn't want the electric bill to soar, and the Christmas season wasn't reason enough for that. I was so thrilled then to see the tree glowing with lights. I'd sleep underneath it, hoping that the feeling would last till next Christmas. I just had to keep that scene in my mind for as long as I could. I only got to see the grandeur of that tree for just one hour on other evenings of the season.

Rising electric bills were also the reason we didn't have a *parul*. Mama said we didn't need it, and besides we already had Christmas lights trailing the shape of a star. That's *parul* enough, according to her.

And yet I would always hear her talk about the *parul* of Mrs. Layson, our well-to-do neighbor who decorated her house extensively as soon as Sept. 1 rolled in. And yes, Mrs. Layson, according to her kids, who were my playmates, served *hamon* and *keso de bola* for *noche buena*.

Mama always dreamed about that *parul*: wondering where she'd put it if she had one, what colors she would choose if she could afford it, and what to tell my dad in case he asked how much she got it for. Risk management, I assumed.

But, she never had a *parul*. She was never able to buy one for the house. And that pained me terribly.

Christmases passed by like the pages of a freebie calendar from the nearby vacuumizing shop. I counted 16 years before seeing our first-ever *parul* replacing the Christmas lights outside the house. And this happened after Mama had sent all four of us children to the nicest schools in the city, the house had been paid in full (and fully furnished) and a six-unit apartment had been built to ensure a steady monthly allowance for Mama and Papa, who was coming home for good that year. I got lost in its crazy blinks and was saddened by its presence.

Mama's *parul* shone inside our home, not in front of our house. It lasted the year round, not just during the Christmas season. It was the kind that didn't need to be hung or plugged to an electrical outlet. And I understood Mama from then on, this didn't have anything to do with her being Ilocana at all.

And so I stood there, in front of our *barangay's* entry (which became the grand prize winner of the Giant Lantern Festival a day later). I was in awe, thinking how Mama would be happy to have one like it. A *parul* as huge as that one, parked next to her cars.

It's about time she upgraded, you know.

Christine C. Salas, 23, recently left her job as station manager of a university-based education radio station to become a full-time mom.

## NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions by e-mail to [youngblood@inquirer.com.ph](mailto:youngblood@inquirer.com.ph) together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

## THEY SAID

## Loser

"It's tantamount to treason if I don't do anything. There is no loss here. We just did what had to be done. If there is a loser, it's going to be the Filipino nation because ... Gloria [Macapagal-Arroyo] is still in power and she will be there even beyond 2010."

—Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV, after declaring that the Peninsula Manila uprising was over

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A REAL HEARING. WHEN THE SANDIGAN-bayan's Fifth Division recently heard the testimony of former Sen. Jovito Salonga—a victim of the Plaza Miranda bombing, which left him permanently deaf in one ear—the word "hearing" regained its original meaning. In contrast to the calm demeanor of the former Senate president, who testified on government claims that a bulk of the firms controlled by business tycoon Lucio Tan was owned by the Marcoses, the others taking part in the proceedings were a picture of agitation. Every now and then, they berated each other for not raising their voice for the witness's sake.

Among those admonished was Presidential Commission on Good Government lawyer Catalino Generillo, who was directly examining Salonga. "Why are you whispering, Attorney Generillo? Don't assume that his hearing is normal," said one of the justices. The stern reminder prompted Generillo to lean toward the former senator to ask him more questions, blocking the view of Tan's lawyer Estelito Mendoza. Like Salonga, Mendoza uses a hearing aid too. A displeased Mendoza gestured vigorously, indicating that with Generillo blocking the former senator's profile, he could not make out what was being discussed.

At one point in the hearing, an apologetic Salonga had to explain his ordeal after the Plaza Miranda bombing to compose the frenzied courtroom.

THE MEDIA VS MALACAÑANG. It seems that firecrackers and poverty issues don't mix, a seasonal truth Malacañang officials have realized too late.

On Thursday, during the taping of the weekly show, "The Cabinet Speaks," members of the Malacañang Press Corps came in droves to hear Health Secretary Francisco T. Duque III talk about the yearly drive against the use of firecrackers and other illegal pyrotechnic devices under the program "Iwas Paputok."

But they were stunned when the secretary, along with Maria Bernardita Flores, executive director of the National Nutrition Council, instead



## Filipino over English

PLEASE ALLOW ME TO COMMENT on the news item about the so-called "English Bill" filed by Cebu Rep. Eduardo Gullas. (Inquirer, 12/17/07) The bill seeks to make English "the sole medium of instruction" in Philippine schools from Grade 3 to 4th year high school. The bill is reportedly supported by 107 congressmen.

We respectfully submit that the proposed bill is unconstitutional. The Constitution provides: "Sec. 7. For purposes of communication and instruction, the official languages of the Philippines are Filipino and, unless otherwise pro-

vided by law, English." (Sec. 7, Art. XIV, 1987 Constitution).

It is crystal-clear that as a medium of instruction and communication, Filipino—whether we like it or not—has precedence over English. In fact, English will remain as a medium only for as long as the law so wishes.

But while English may cease to be a medium if a law is enacted to that effect, Filipino may cease to be an official language of instruction and communication by force of a constitutional amendment only. In other words, no statutory legislation, even if initiated by so many

congressmen, may alter the priority position of Filipino over English as a medium of instruction in Philippine schools.

I believe that it was only last year that the Office of the President decreed the priority of English over Filipino, or altered the "bilingual policy" of instruction in Philippine schools. It was immediately challenged in court by some eminent personalities from the academe.

—NELSON D. LAVINA,  
ambassador (Ret.),  
nlavina2@fastmail.fm

## Common sense, not hysterics

IT IS A SAD DAY FOR THE COUNTRY like a columnist of great stature like Fr. Joaquin G. Bernas fails to see the forest for the trees and pours more gasoline into the Sumilao controversy.

Yes, Bernas has the scholarship to weigh in and talk his head off on whatever issue he wants to—but he should do so within the parameters of sobriety and common sense. I certainly hope that Bernas' latest views and the hysterics he aired there do not reflect those of his religious community. If they do, the rule to resolve conflicts in a civilized manner in the Philippines is in real trouble.

Bernas portrays the Sumilao controversy as an uneven fight between big business and the farmers. A David-versus-Goliath situation, he calls it. If that is not a clear case of stirring up class animosity which could lead to more serious confrontation, I don't know what is. The Sumilao controversy is simply a case of a group of 55 farmers wanting to take possession of a 144-hectare land, and a food firm acting to protect its right of ownership, legitimized by the highest court of the land. Who should really own the land, let the Court decide.

Bernas claims that the new owner of the 144-hectare land, San Miguel Foods Inc. (SMFI) has not complied with the proviso of the conversion order to use the land for agro-industrial purposes. But SMFI has it using the land not for farming but as a site for modern, state-of-the-art, vertically integrated food processing facilities. What could be more agro-industrial than that?

Compassion for the farmers is what impels Bernas, maybe, to make a banzai charge at big business, sword swinging and to proclaim that issuing the land for a high-tech agro-industrial project is not the right way to bring prosperity to the farmers. Giving the land to the farmers is the right way, is it?

Dividing 144 hectares among the 55 farmers will result in each of them getting exactly 2.6 hectares. Bernas can figure out for himself if such a minuscule piece of property can be coaxed to yield an income sufficient to feed a farmer's family of six, give him and his family an abode better than a bahay kubo, cover the family's medical needs, and most important of all, enable him to send his children to school up to college. Yes, college? Because education—not being "a man with the hoe" forever—is what would level the playing field for the farmer.

"Let the little people decide what is best for themselves and for their dignity as human beings," sermonizes Bernas.

A very romantic sentiment—until one realizes that what the good father means is giving 2.6 hectares to each of the 55 Sumilao farmers at *bahala na siya sa buhay niya*. The implication of that admonition—politically correct, maybe, but chilling—is the farmer's consignment in perpetuity to a life of bondage to marginal farming and poverty.

—JESUS L. ARRANZA,  
president,  
Federation of  
Philippine Industries,  
701 Atlanta Center Bldg.,  
Annapolis Street, San Juan City

## No receipts in 'tiangge'

THE BUREAU OF INTERNAL REVENUE always reminds us to demand receipts for purchases. This is to ensure that shop owners properly pay their taxes. However, as Christmas time neared, I noticed that most *tiangge* (flea market) stalls, if not all of them, were not issuing proper official receipts. They would only issue one when asked to; many of them didn't even have BIR-registered receipts.

I was particularly irked by a fruit stand and other small shops in the middle of the Rockwell Center. They have been operating there for some time now (years even). Who owns these stalls anyway? How come they don't issue receipts? Some of the goods they sell are even imported.

I am not singling out these stores. Around the country, there are more of these business entities that don't issue receipts. Although I am not sure how things are done in wet markets, not once have I seen my mom come home with a receipt issued by a store in a *paterique*.

In developed countries, an official receipt is always given for every purchase.

I urge everyone to ask for a receipt every time they make a purchase. After all, it's for our protection as consumers. If the BIR wants to increase its collections, it should start by strictly implementing the law by properly collecting taxes, not by increasing taxes on commodities.

—ABEN CRUZ,  
aben101781@yahoo.com



A RALLY denouncing poverty as public enemy No. 1

## The problem with GMA, Esperon and other militarists

THE FACES OF HUNGER AND poverty, especially on innocent children, demand urgent attention and action. The tragic deaths of our little ones from extreme hunger and poverty can happen again and again as long as the government is engaged in brazen corruption.

Rosalie Ebrada, a 7-year-old Grade 1 pupil, died on Nov. 21, 2007. She was among those who suffered extreme hunger in Rapu-rapu, a fishing community in Albay, Bicol whose environment has been devastated and where livelihood has been disrupted since the Lafayette Mining Corp. started to operate. On that day, Rosalie was looking forward to benefit from a feeding program in her school. The teacher told her to get a cup for the soup. But on her way home to get a cup, she fell to the ground and died. Maybe she was too weak and hungry, that is why she died, her grandmother said.

On Nov. 2, All Souls' Day, Mariannet Ampay, a 12-year-old girl in Mindanao, became despondent

over her family's poverty. She hanged herself to death a day after her father told her he could not give her the P100 she needed for a school project.

In the face of relentless protests against gridding poverty and corruption scandals, Malacañang wants to revive the anti-subversion law. According to army chief Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr., the Philippines needs a law to defeat insurgency.

The two young girls did not wish for an extravagant life. They didn't need the anti-subversion law or the anti-terrorism law to survive and live a life of dignity. What they needed were the essentials: food, decent work for their parents, education, health services, clean and healthy environment. Rosalie and Mariannet represented not only the children of their age, but the millions of Filipinos who remain economically deprived and powerless. They tragically died just as the majority of Filipinos are getting more impoverished than ever. Taxes and

prices of commodities are increasing but the poor families' incomes are decreasing.

The problem with Ms. Gloria Macapaga Arroyo, General Esperon and scores of militarists in the government is that instead of addressing the roots of poverty they attack "insurgency" as the main problem of the country. In stead of solving the roots of decades-long armed conflicts they repeatedly declare their intent to crush the so-called insurgents. In its glaring assault against the people, the government chains the people in economic misery while intensifying its attack on civil and political rights through repressive laws such as the anti-terror law and the antiquated anti-subversion law that are aimed against administration critics with legitimate issues, who are clamoring for change.

—NORMA P. DOLLAGA,  
general secretary,  
Kapatiran Simbahan Para Sa Bayan (Kasimbayan), 3/F NCCP,  
879 Edsa, Quezon City

## Undeserved publicity for communist-terrorist

HOW COULD THE INQUIRER write articles praising the hypocrite and terrorist Jose Ma. Sison? (Sison recalls birth of CPP in Aklan, INQUIRER, 12/26/07) Why, if he really believes what he espouses, is he living in self-exile in a democratic country?

How can he enjoin others to keep up the "struggle" while he lives in luxury? How can he continue to kill his own countrymen in the futile effort to overthrow the government? And most of all, how can anyone of any intelligence continue to believe in communism, which has failed all

over the world? Of course, he preys on the uneducated, poor people he can deceive.

Sison is nothing but a coward and a hypocrite. He is nothing but a common terrorist.

—A BUTUCAN,  
aida\_novatierra@iwan.com

## GSIS missed retiree's 3 years of service

I WISH TO DENOUNCE THE INJUSTICE being perpetrated by the Government Service Insurance System against retirees, including me. I fully agree with INQUIRER columnist Honesto C. General in his column "GSIS Punish the villain, not the victim." (INQUIRER, 12/19/07)

Fresh out of college, I started working with the government on March 13, 1974. From my first employer, the National Grains Authority (now, National Food Authority) to the National

Home Mortgage Finance Corp., I continuously served the government for 33 years and three months until I retired last June 15, 2007, under Executive Order 366.

But I was paid an equivalent of only 30 years of credited service. Where did my three years of service go? Will anyone help us?

—VIRGILIO V. MACLANG,  
1199 ARBE Compound,  
Old Sumapa, Malolos City

We're sharing  
that  
number  
one  
feeling



Informing and inspiring Filipino readers for more than two decades through balanced news and fearless views, the Philippine Daily Inquirer has undoubtedly become the country's number 1 newspaper. We share this honor with you, our readers, and our heartfelt thank you for making the Inquirer a part of your daily reading habit.

As we celebrate our 22nd anniversary, Inquirer grants Number 1 wishes of 22 loyal readers—from a simple wish of meeting your local idol to an adventurous one like spending a weekend with your family in Palawan. Let us know what you really want in 300 words or less, tell us

- 1) How long have you been reading the Philippine Daily Inquirer?
- 2) What do you like most about the Inquirer, and we dare ask, what do you like least?
- 3) What is your number 1 wish that Inquirer can grant you, and why?

**Formal Requirements:**

- 1) Answer the form (99 questions) in a neat 40-50 words or less.
- 2) Check the (1) way of sending your entry:
  - a) Direct:
    - 1) Send to:
      - Philippine Daily Inquirer
      - Attention: Entry Form
      - 1000 China Bank Avenue
      - Corner Naga and Marikina Streets
      - Manila City 1204
    - 2) You may only send one (1) entry. Entries will be based on your first entry. All other entries will be disregarded.
  - b) Indirect:
    - 1) Provide the following information in your entry:
      - a) Full name
      - b) Residential address
      - c) Telephone number
      - d) E-mail address
      - e) Date of birth
    - 2) Philippine Daily Inquirer will accept entries from 12:00 AM of December 2, 2007 to 11:59 PM of January 3, 2008 only.
- 3) Do Philippine Daily Inquirer is up to its 22nd year, twenty-two (22) best entries will be chosen by a panel of Inquirer editors and moderators.
  - 1) Winners will be announced by Inquirer up January 31, and notified through postal mail.
  - 2) Winner must present a valid one (1) valid ID with photo (passport, company, government, and the certificate from the Philippine Daily Inquirer).
  - 3) Prizes can be claimed at the Philippine Daily Inquirer head office.
  - 4) Prizes will be paid by the Philippine Daily Inquirer.
  - 5) Prizes not claimed within sixty (60) days from receipt of notification will be forfeited in favor of the Philippine Daily Inquirer.
  - 6) Winner shall agree to have their names and photos published in the newspaper or announced in any media or manner of advertisement on the Philippine Daily Inquirer (by direct advertisement).
  - 7) In case of dispute, the Philippine Daily Inquirer decision shall be final.
  - 8) All employees of the Philippine Daily Inquirer shall participate up to limited degree of transparency or ethical and of its advertising agencies are not allowed to participate in the prize.

**INQUIRER**



Republic of the Philippines  
**HOME GUARANTY CORPORATION**

## INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Home Guaranty Corporation (HGC) is inviting Interested parties to submit separate proposals for the disposition of the two projects described under a joint venture arrangement.

MARGARITA EASTVILLE			MARGARITA PLAZA		
C. Lavea St., Brgy. San Isidro, Apitipo City			Scouts Limbag, Rallos & Yberdozani, Brgy. Sacred Heart, Quezon City		
Area (sq.m.)	Value of the Land	HGC's Guaranteed Share	Area (sq.m.)	Value of the Land	HGC's Guaranteed Share
7,523	53,584,500.00	P44M or 40% of the net proceeds from the joint venture arrangement plus reasonable interest, whichever is higher	2,386	50,082,000.00	P1,00M or 40% of the net proceeds from the joint venture arrangement plus reasonable interest, whichever is higher
TOTAL					

\* with housing units

Payment of HGC's guaranteed share must not exceed a maximum of three (3) years.

Bidders are advised to inspect the subject properties to determine their actual conditions. For each project, bidding documents can be obtained from the HGC's Asset Management Department (AMD) at Jade Building (4th Floor), 335 Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City upon payment of a non-refundable fee of TWENTY FIVE THOUSAND PESOS (P 25,000.00) until January 11, 2008. For further inquiries please call the AMD at tel. nos. 887-3266 & 887-3290 or visit the HGC office at Jade Building, 335 Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City.

THE CORPORATION RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL OFFERS AND TO WAIVE ANY DEFECTS OR TO ACCEPT SUCH OFFERS AS MAY BE CONSIDERED ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE CORPORATION.

(Sgd.) ATTY. DANILO C. JAVIER  
Chairman  
Asset Disposition Committee



# Killing sparks violence even as Pakistan weeps

From page A1

spasm of violence less than two weeks before a crucial election.

Those outside the mausoleum beat their chests in grief, while many shouted slogans blaming President Pervez Musharraf over her death in a fiery carnage in Rawalpindi.

"As long as the moon and sun are alive, so is the name of Bhutto," they chanted.

The wave of violence, especially in her native Sindh province, that erupted after her assassination killed at least 24 people, including three policemen.

Chants of "Shame on the killer Musharraf, shame on the killer US" were heard from the throng lining the road and standing on rooftops during her funeral procession.

"No matter how many Bhuttos you will kill, a Bhutto will emerge from each house," others cried.

"We're anticipating the situation might get worse after the funeral," Sindh Interior Minister Akhtar Zaman told Reuters.

The two-time former premier was buried next to her father, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, also a prime minister and who was executed by the military in 1979 after be-

ing ousted from power.

Bhutto was laid to rest amid scenes of searing emotion.

A huge roar greeted her coffin, wrapped in the black, green and red flag of her Pakistan People's Party, as it was borne toward the Bhutto mausoleum in a white vehicle.

It took more than two hours to crawl the 7 km from her family home in Naudero to the private mausoleum in Garhi Khuda Bakhsh.

Many mourners waited in an outpouring of grief as the casket passed the vast crowds hanging out of every building and packing every street corner.

Many cities were nearly deserted as businesses closed and public transportation came to a halt at the start of three days of national mourning for Bhutto.

## Polls may be cancelled

The outbursts of violence stoked fears that a Jan. 8 election meant to return Pakistan to civilian rule could be put off, although caretaker Prime Minister Mohammad Yousaf said there was no change in timing for now.

## Fears of instability

World leaders urged Pakistan not to be deflected from a course toward democracy, as

fears of instability in a region racked by Islamist militancy upset markets on Friday and triggered a flight to less risky assets such as bonds and gold.

Many of Bhutto's supporters blamed President Musharraf for her death, along with the United States which has backed the former army general, dismissing speculation that she had been killed by Islamist militants linked to al-Qaida.

## Shoot on sight

Authorities issued an order to shoot violent protesters on sight.

Hundreds of cars, trucks and buses smoldered in the interior of Sindh and crowds of men set up road blocks and chanted slogans against Musharraf.

Meanwhile, a blast at an election meeting in Pakistan's troubled northwest killed six people, including a candidate for the party that supports Musharraf, police said.

Bhutto, 54, returned home from eight years of self-imposed exile in October, hoping her huge following among the poor would propel her to power for the third time in a vote intended to stabilize a country struggling to contain Islamist violence.

But as she left the campaign rally in Rawalpindi, where she

spoke of threats to her life, she stood to wave to supporters from the sun-roof of her bullet-proof car. An attacker shot at her before blowing himself up, police and witnesses said.

## Friends and foe stunned

"The shooter was either very well trained or he was very close so he could hit her in the temple and neck," a security official said.

She was pronounced dead in a hospital in Rawalpindi, home of the Pakistan army and the city where her father was hanged in 1979.

Authorities initially said she died from bullet wounds, but Dr. Mussadiq Khan, a surgeon who treated her, said she died from shrapnel that hit her on the right side of the skull.

Bhutto had no heart beat or pulse when she arrived at the hospital and doctors failed in their efforts to resuscitate her, he said.

Across Pakistan, a country used to political violence and ruled by the military for more than half of its life, friends and foe alike were stunned by her death.

"Benazir Bhutto was a ray of hope for the moderate people," said Abbas Raza, a bank officer in the city of Lahore. "But with her death, we've lost all hope."

Bhutto had spoken out strongly against Islamist violence and had been threatened by pro-Taliban militants.

Former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, Bhutto's old political rival, said his party would boycott the January election.

## 'Elections stand'

He blamed Musharraf, who seized power in a 1999 military coup but retired from the army last month, for the instability.

Musharraf imposed a state of emergency in November in what was seen as an attempt to stop the judiciary from vetoing his reelection as president. He lifted emergency rule this month.

Authorities ordered the central bank and all schools across Pakistan to close for three days.

The United States, which relies on Pakistan as an ally against al-Qaida and the Taliban in neighboring Afghanistan, had championed the Harvard- and Oxford-educated Bhutto, seeing in her the best hope of a return to democracy.

"Elections stand as they were announced," Prime Minister Yousaf told reporters.

But analysts said the assassination, which followed a wave

of suicide attacks and the worsening of an Islamist insurgency, could make this impossible.

## Country paralyzed

As authorities struggled to keep a lid on the seething anger that erupted into violence across the country, the government for the first time pointed a finger at al-Qaida for her slaying.

The extent of the violence has paralyzed the nuclear-armed Muslim nation, triggering alarm around the world.

Interior ministry spokesperson Brig. Javed Cheema said Bhutto had been on an al-Qaida hit list and it was likely the Islamic extremist network played a role in Thursday's suicide attack that killed her and around 20 others.

"Now there is every possibility that al-Qaida is behind this tragic attack to undermine the security of Pakistan," he said.

Officials ordered paramilitary forces in Karachi, a Bhutto stronghold, to shoot rioters and sent troops into several other cities in the south.

In Rawalpindi, the scene of her killing, police fired tear gas, and a crowd of some 1,500 stormed the office of a progovernment party in Peshawar. AP, AFP, Reuters

## GMA, world leaders condemn assassination

From page A1

law and order," Ms Arroyo said.

Former President Corason Aquino expressed her sadness.

"I extend my sympathies to her family and the people of Pakistan. And I hope that her efforts to restore democracy in her country will not be forgotten," Aquino said in a brief statement.

## Tormented region

The Vatican spokesperson, the Rev. Federico Lombardi, said Pope Benedict XVI was immediately informed of the "terrible news" of Bhutto's murder.

"One cannot see signs of peace in this tormented region," Lombardi said.

In Moscow, Russian President Vladimir Putin sent a telegram to Musharraf saying Bhutto's murder was "a challenge thrown down by forces of terrorism not only to Pakistan but also to the entire international community."

Anatoly Safonov, Putin's envoy on international cooperation against terrorism, expressed fears the assassination would trigger violent repercussions.

## Cowards fear democracy

From Iraq, a country that has struggled daily with terrorism and assassinations, President Jalal Talabani condemned Bhutto's killing and said Pakistan had lost a courageous

politician who stood firm against "the forces of darkness and terror."

In a letter to Musharraf, French President Nicolas Sarkozy called the attack an "odious act" and said "terrorism and violence have no place in the democratic debate and the combat of ideas and programs."

In Britain, where Bhutto had attended Oxford University, Prime Minister Gordon Brown said she "risked everything in her attempt to win democracy in Pakistan and she has been assassinated by cowards who are afraid of democracy."

"The terrorists must not be allowed to kill democracy in Pakistan, and this atrocity strengthens our resolve that the terrorists will not win there, here, or anywhere in the world," Brown said.

In India, which has fought three wars against Pakistan, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said Bhutto was irreplaceable, and noted she had striven to improve relations between the two nuclear-armed countries.

Afghanistan's President Hamid Karzai said he was "deeply pained" by the assassination of "this brave sister of ours, a brave daughter of the Muslim world."

## Her single weapon

US Congressman Patrick Kennedy was in Pakistan and on



**HUSBAND WEEPS.** Asif Ali Zardari, husband of the fallen Pakistani opposition leader, breaks down during funeral rites in her home village about 550 km from Karachi.

his way to dinner with Bhutto when he heard about the attack. Kennedy told The Associated Press in a telephone interview that Pakistanis were setting fires in the countryside "that are lighting up the sky tonight."

Italian Premier Romano Prodi said he was filled with grief and called Bhutto "a woman who chose to fight her battle until the end with a single weapon—the one of dialogue and political debate."

"The difficult path toward peace and democracy in that region must not be stopped, and

Bhutto's sacrifice will serve as the strongest example for those who do not surrender to terrorism," Prodi said.

## East Asia's strong reaction

Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Qin Gang said his country was "shocked ... and strongly condemns the terrorist attack."

Japan also condemned Bhutto's killing, but expressed "hope the Pakistani government and people would overcome this hardship and firmly pave the way toward democratization."

"This assassination is an evil act, it's a cowardly act, it's an act which has brought about universal condemnation from around the world and deservedly so," Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd told reporters.

## Blow to democracy

Indonesia's President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono called Bhutto's murder "a severe blow to Pakistan's democratic process" and expressed his hope that "the law be upheld and democracy be respected in Pakistan."

New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark said she was deeply shocked and saddened at the news of the "cowardly assassination."

Chilean President Michelle Bachelet paid "sincere tribute to a woman ... who fought her en-

tire life for a better Pakistan." President Cristina Fernandez of Argentina called the assassination "an abominable act."

German Chancellor Angela Merkel said the "cowardly terrorist attack ... also targets the stability and democratic process of Pakistan."

Reactions were equally strong throughout the Muslim world. Turkey, a close ally of Pakistan, urged Islamabad not to stray from the path of democracy.

"In a subtle recognition of the way in which power had already evolved in Pakistan,

even before a vote had been cast, the demise of Ms Bhutto had become the possibility the outside world had most dreaded," The Times commented.

Leading US newspapers urged Bush to reassess his unconditional backing of Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf, a key ally in the US "war on terror."

"American policy must now be directed at building a strong democracy in Pakistan that has the respect and the support of its own citizens and the will and the means to fight al-Qaida and the Taliban," said a New York Times editorial.

"The days of Washington mortgaging its interests there to one or two individuals must finally come to an end."

where Bhutto lived in exile for some years. Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed al-Nahayan said "the UAE has been tormented by this huge loss."

The 57-nation Organization of the Islamic Conference, the largest pan-Islamic organization, condemned "the outrageous and brutal murder" and the 22-member Arab League called it a "heinous terrorist crime."

Cynthia D. Balana, AP, AFP

## She was beautiful, brilliant, charismatic; her life a sprawling epic

From page A1

Even Bhutto's worst critics would say that "she was a masterful politician," said Zaffar Abbas, an editor for the respected Dawn newspaper. She knew "what the people of this country wanted."

"If you asked an ordinary person what they achieved when Benazir Bhutto was in power, they would say at least she gave us a voice and she talked about us and our problems. That was her real achievement."

Around the world, Bhutto was a feminist heroine. And in her campaigns, she advocated new services for women and opposed sexual discrimination, though few measures were adopted under her government.

## Graveyard pledge

Her life was a sprawling epic. Her father, Pakistan's president and then prime minister, was hanged; one brother died mysteriously, the other in a shootout.

Recalling standing at his grave, she once wrote: "At that moment I pledged to myself that I would not rest until democracy had returned to Pakistan."

She spent five years imprisoned by her father's tormentors, mostly in solitary confinement, before rising twice to the office of prime minister.

She fled before her conviction

on corruption charges, living abroad for eight years. She could have lived there comfortably, far from the cauldron of Pakistani politics, but chose not to do so.

And when she returned in October to marshal opposition to President Pervez Musharraf, a suicide attacker targeted her homecoming parade in Karachi. More than 140 people died.

## Nehru, Gandhi

The 54-year-old Bhutto escaped injury. "We will not be deterred," she said then.

And she celebrated her survival.

"Bhutto is alive! Bhutto is alive! Bhutto is alive!" she shouted at a rally in December.

Like the Nehru-Gandhi family that has long been a force in the politics of neighboring India, the Bhuttos have held a central role in Pakistan for nearly a half-century.

Benazir's father, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, was the son of a wealthy landowning family in southern Pakistan and founder of the Pakistan People's Party. With a populist, prodemocracy message, he rose to power in 1971.

But six years later, he was deposed by the military. In 1979 he was executed by the government of Gen. Mohammad Zia-ul-Haq after his much-disputed conviction on charges of ar-

ranging the murder of the father of a political opponent.

## Under house arrest

A day before he was hanged, his daughter visited him in prison.

"I told him on my oath in his death cell, I would carry on his work," Bhutto would recall.

But at the time and for years after, Benazir Bhutto could not fight for her father's cause—she was in jail or under house arrest.

The elder Bhutto had sent his daughter to study politics and government at Harvard and then at Oxford, where she was elected to lead the prestigious debating society, the Oxford Union.

Her youngest brother, Shahnawaz, organized opposition from France, but he died under mysterious circumstances in his apartment on the Riviera in 1980; the family insisted he was poisoned, but no charges were brought.

Released in 1984 to seek medical treatment for a serious ear infection in London, Benazir established a People's Party office there, and waited for an opportunity to strike back.

## Opposed by brother

Two years later, she returned to lead mass rallies calling for Zia to step down and allow a civilian government and elec-

tions. He refused. But in 1988, the strongman died in an explosion on his plane.

Benazir rallied her father's party, only to find that she was being opposed by her brother, Murtaza—and that her mother was backing him.

Still, Benazir Bhutto won on a platform of "food, clothing and shelter for all." And just months after giving birth to her first child, she took the office that was taken from her father.

Twenty months later, President Ghulam Ishaq Khan dissolved parliament and removed her from office, citing abuse of power.

## Feminist heroine

The new army-backed government filed charges of corruption against her, while Islamic clerics tried to get a court to bar her from running in elections. She was a bad Muslim, they said.

"Anyone who supports the Pakistan People's Party will not enter heaven," Muslim cleric Abdul Qadir said ahead of the October 1990 elections.

She lost the election to Nawaz Sharif. His time in office was also short-lived because of more accusations of corruption. He resigned in 1993.

Bhutto, by then a mother of three children, won a second

term as prime minister in October 1993. In 1996, her government fell in the face of accusations of nepotism and economic mismanagement.

## No room for love

In her personal life, Bhutto surprised many by agreeing to an arranged marriage in 1987 with Karachi businessman Asif Ali Zardari.

She said that as the leader of a Muslim party, she was not free to marry for love, which would have "destroyed my political career," she told The New York Times.

Her marriage to Zardari would play a major role in her downfall.

The couple would be accused of charging millions of dollars in "commissions" from foreign companies. Zardari was called "Mr. 10 Percent" during Bhutto's first term because of these alleged kickbacks; in her second term, the name and the nickname were upgraded to "Mr. 40 Percent."

"I never influenced the awarding of a contract, and until my dying day, I'll stand by it. They have tried to ruin me because they want to ruin the concept of a pluralistic, liberal Pakistan. To be accused of robbing, that really pains me," she said in 1999.

Switzerland froze more than \$13 million in the couple's accounts, and convicted Bhutto of

money laundering. (The conviction was thrown out when she contested it.)

Zardari also was accused of engineering the 1996 death of his wife's brother, Murtaza Bhutto, who died in a gun battle with police in Karachi. His death contributed to the fall of Benazir's government.

## Stuff of tragedy

Bhutto tried for a third term and lost; she left Pakistan in 1999, just before a court convicted her of corruption and banned her from politics.

The verdict was later quashed, but she stayed away.

Then Musharraf signed an amnesty, bailing any corruption charges against her and others. And she decided to return to Pakistan and the political arena once more.

As she had done before, she campaigned on social welfare issues, occasionally mentioning the antiterrorist message that had made her so appealing to American officials.

She was a survivor, and proud of it.

Thirteen years before, when a reporter suggested that her life was the stuff of Greek tragedy, she laughed.

"Well, I hope not so tragic," she said. "Don't all Greek dramas end in tragedy?" AP, AFP



# INQUIRER *Visayas*

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## PhilHealth probes cataract claims

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.  
Iloilo City

FOR MOST OF THE PATIENTS—OLD and poor, barely educated and coming from the far-flung villages of Negros—it was an offer difficult to refuse: free surgery in a hospital in Bacolod City, plus free meals, free transportation and accommodation.

Some have come out to tell their sad stories. Leonila Divino of Barangay Bata in Bacolod, underwent cataract operation and multiple laser treatment for both eyes. She went blind shortly after the procedure.

A 73-year-old patient from Barangay San Jose in Manjuyod town in Negros Oriental

was operated on his left eye on March 14 and on the other eye on April 18. He died of a heart disease (acute myocardial infarction) a day after his last surgery.

These are among the cases being investigated by the Philippine Health Insurance Corp. (PhilHealth) amid a crackdown on alleged irregularities in cataract operations charged to the government insurance system.

Hospitals and doctors, who received the biggest payments, denied any irregularities, which involved hundreds of millions of pesos in PhilHealth claims to cataract operations and paid to hospitals and ophthalmologists in Western Visayas.

The irregularities include "padding" of

amounts by doctors and hospitals to exact full payments by inserting costs of medicines and services that cataract patients had not incurred.

According to a PhilHealth position paper, the patients were recruited and screened "in the guise of free medical outreach programs" by "agents" sent out by ophthalmologists, in coordination with the hospitals where the operations were to be performed.

While targeting mostly PhilHealth members and dependents, "the organizers do not openly explain to their patients that it would claim and PhilHealth will be paying for the hospital expenses," the paper said.

"Non-PhilHealth members are advised to enroll as voluntary members to wait for their eligibility period or else shoulder the operation cost."

The document was based on results of an investigation conducted by the PhilHealth office in Western Visayas.

### Deception

"The information about free surgery was not true and thus constitutes deception," it said.

Patients attracted by the promises of free operation, meals, transportation and accommodation, are transported to hospitals in the city, it said.

The "agents," including barangay officials, health workers and even a secretary of an ophthalmologist, were reportedly paid P300 for each patient.

The investigation revealed that the amount charged for cataract operations by hospitals from PhilHealth members were "too exorbitant compared to that of non-PhilHealth members."

Non-members were charged from P2,000 to P2,100 for each operation, and members, from P22,050.74 to P33,897.76.

Amid protests from patients and ophthalmologists, PhilHealth started instituting corrective measures late this year.

In October, PhilHealth issued a circular stopping the payment of claims for cataract surgery during medical missions and through recruitment schemes.

It also filed administrative cases against four doctors and three hospitals in relation to irregularities in insurance claims for cataract surgeries.

The doctors are facing a total of 29 charges for padding claims, misrepresentation and violations of provisions of the PhilHealth warranties of accreditation and Re-

public Act No. 7875 (National Health Insurance Act) before PhilHealth's prosecution department, said lawyer Jay Villegas, manager of PhilHealth's fact-finding and administrative investigation department.

Administrative charges would also be filed before the Professional Regulatory Commission for the cancellation of professional licenses of doctors found guilty.

According to Lorna Fajardo, PhilHealth acting president and chief executive officer, some doctors and hospitals have been "playing" with and "gaming" from PhilHealth rules and policies.

"They took advantage of the trust we gave them," she told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

### Unethical practices

PhilHealth paid 19,145 cataract-related claims, reaching around P390 million, to hospitals and doctors in Western Visayas from January 2004 to June 2007, according to its corporate planning department.

The agency's position paper on the cataract cases dated Aug. 1, 2005, a copy of which was obtained by the INQUIRER, noted that of the 3,771 cataract-related claims in 2004, 2,601 were filed by two Bacolod-based hospitals alone.

These were the Our Lady of Mercy Specialty Hospital, which filed 1,818 claims and was paid P39,921,202.92, and the Dr. Pablo Torre Memorial Hospital, 783 claims worth P12,267,235.40.

Dr. Evangelina Camarista-Johnson, chair of the board of director and chief executive officer of the Our Lady of Mercy Specialty Hospital, said the institution was not involved in any "shenanigans."

She welcomed the investigation of doctors and hospital, but pointed out that she had nothing to explain because her hospital had not been named among those under probe.

Johnson admitted that the hospital was among the top in PhilHealth claims in Western Visayas because it was one of the leading eye centers in the country.

She denied that the patients were unaware that the cataract operations were charged to PhilHealth.

Doctors involved in the cataract operations also earned millions of pesos from PhilHealth. In 2006 alone, PhilHealth paid P48,491,030 in professional fees to 10 doctors in Western Visayas for eye-related operations.

Leonila Divino, of Barangay Bata in Bacolod, underwent cataract operation and multiple laser treatment for both eyes. She went blind shortly after the procedure.



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A CONTROVERSIAL poster portraying President Macapagal-Arroyo and her ousted predecessor, Joseph Estrada, as Mary and Joseph with infant Jesus in the manger stirred a lot of interest in Cebu City and was published earlier in the INQUIRER.

The owner of the building from which the poster hung said he had the poster designed in such a way to promote peace in Cebu and the entire country. When Christmas Day came, two men were killed and two policemen were injured in an exchange of gunfire in the city. (INQUIRER)



## Bloody Christmas in Cebu

By Jhunnex Napallacan  
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—IT WAS A BLOODY CHRISTMAS Day in Cebu City.

Two workers were killed while three others were injured, including two policemen from the Cebu City Police Office's (CCPO) Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team, during related gun crimes in Sitio Romblon, Barangay Inayawan, Cebu City Dec. 25.

Amel Cabardo Villanica, 22, a woodcraft worker, was declared dead on arrival at the Chong Hua Hospital in Cebu City after a shell craft company worker shot him at 8:34 p.m. of Christmas Day.

The suspect, Alejandro Bayarcal, 22, native of Canlaon City, Negros Oriental, also wounded village watchman Wilfredo Ortopia and two policemen—PO2 Reynaldo Calles and SPO2 Reynante Nioda.

Bayarcal was shot and killed by other members of the SWAT team and the Cebu City Mobile Patrol Group (MPG).

SPO2 Rey delos Santos, of the CCPO's opera-

tion section, said Villarico and Bayarcal figured in an altercation, which led to the shooting.

Delos Santos said Villarico was talking with his girlfriend outside the house of Bayarcal's employer when Bayarcal urinated near them.

Delos Santos said Villarico berated Bayarcal, triggering a heated argument between the two.

Delos Santos said Bayarcal left but he returned with a 357 Magnum revolver and threatened to shoot Villarico.

Delos Santos said Villarico approached Bayarcal, which prompted a brief struggle.

"When Villarico stumbled, Bayarcal shot him in the chest," Delos Santos said quoting the report of the Homicide Section.

Bayarcal ran into the house of his employer. Policemen from SWAT and MPG arrived with Inayawan barangay captain Ruston Ignacio and several village watchmen.

Bayarcal resisted arrest and shot Ortopia, hitting him in the right hand.

He again fired at the policemen, hitting Calles in the right side of the body and Nioda in the hands.



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## Arrest order sought for mayor over custody war

By Carla P. Gomez  
Inquirer Visayas

**BACOLOD CITY**—ACTRESS Marie Roxanne "Pinky" Recto on Thursday asked the Supreme Court to issue an arrest warrant for her former partner, Pulupandan Mayor Magdaleno Peña, for defying a SC order to return their 3-year-old son to her.

Recto's lawyer, Evelyn Ursua, said Recto also asked the SC to cite Peña in contempt and bar him from leaving the country.

Recto also sought a SC order directing the Philippine National Police and the National Bureau of Investigation to enforce its Dec. 3 resolution to turn over the child to Recto, Ursua said.

Recto's motion said after the SC issued a resolution Dec. 3 the NBI failed to find Peña and the child at his residence in Barangay Ubay, Pulupandan.

### Defiance

It quoted Peña as saying he was somewhere South and was out of the country.

"It appears that the petitioner has no intention at all to comply with the Supreme Court resolution," the motion said.

Recto, in her petition, also noted Peña's conflicting statements on his and the child's location, which was "obviously intended to mislead the court and the authorities."

She said there were no immigration records showing that Peña and the child left the country from Jan. 1 to Dec. 18, 2007.

The motion said Peña had displayed brazen and public defiance of the SC that, it added, was aggravated by his being a lawyer.

### NPA factor

It said Peña was likely to flee the country with the child if it became the only way to keep the child away from Recto.

"I have no intention of turning over my son to be kidnapped by the NPA," Peña said in a phone interview.

"I will answer the contempt charges and all the matters... At least, in the meantime, my son is alive," he said.

He said he filed a motion at the Supreme Court Third Division asking Justice Antonio Eduardo Nachura to inhibit himself from the case.

Nachura has penned the SC order to turn over the child to Recto, Peña added.

He said military and police intelligence assets had warned him of a plot by communist guerrillas to kidnap the child as soon as the boy was turned over to Recto.

At the same time, however, he bragged that the guerrillas couldn't get him.

"The New People's Army are no match for me but certainly Pinky has no resources like I have," he said in a phone interview.

## Panlilio critics ask bishop: Is he still priest?

**CITY OF SAN FERNANDO**—A civil society group that has turned critical of Gov. Eddie Panlilio has asked Pampanga Archbishop Paciano Aniceto to inform Catholics and Christians in the province on the status of Panlilio, a priest, in the Roman Catholic Church.

In a Dec. 26 letter signed by its chair, Lolita Hizon, the Citizen's Organization for Unity, Support, Critical Initiative and Community Empowerment (Conscience) said "we are convinced before God and conscience that the time has come for your kind office to categorically, officially and publicly inform us about the status of your priest and Governor Panlilio."

Conscience asked answers on at least five questions.

"Is it true that according to the law of the Church herself,

# Solon says Asean summit deals violated laws 'with impunity'

By Norman Bordadora

**BAYAN MUNA REP. TEODORO CASIÑO SAID THE** alleged overprice of the Cebu International Convention Center by P50 million was "only the tip of the iceberg" of corruption in the preparations for the 12th Asean Leaders' Summit in Cebu in January.

Quoting a Commission on Audit Report for 2006, Casiño said the COA found that P1 525 billion worth of 136 projects "ranging from the putting up of lampposts, road repairs, and plants" were implemented without public bidding.

He said his militant party-list group, Bayan Muna, will file a resolution asking the House to start an investigation.

"We are doing this to have a parallel or even a joint probe with the Senate since this involves more than P3 billion pesos

of taxpayers' money," he said.

The COA report that Casiño quoted also listed other alleged irregularities worth more than P1.5 billion in the summit preparations.

Opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson has also asked the Senate to look into alleged corruption in the preparations for the summit following persistent reports of irregularities almost a year after the leaders' meeting.

"The Cebu International Convention Center, overpriced by at least P50 million, is only the tip of the iceberg of questionable

government transactions wherein powerful officials of the country, the province and the Department of Public Works and Highways may be involved," he said.

Casiño said that a COA report for 2006 found the following irregularities in the summit preparations:

One hundred thirty-six projects costing P1.525 billion were implemented without public bidding; 63 projects costing P766.749 million were implemented without perfected contracts;

The approved budget for the supply and installation of 660 sets of street lamps was bloated by P35.557 million;

Sixteen regular maintenance projects costing P168.320 million, which were implemented outside the venues of the summit, were listed as Asean-relat-

ed projects; and the repair or construction of new roads worth P30 333 million were done on private lands.

"This shows that Cebu's hosting of the 12th Asean summit was a grand project wherein many government laws on procurement, transparency and ethical standards were violated with impunity," Casiño said.

"This major waste of government funds must be immediately investigated by the House," he added.

Casiño said the Asean summit was something the government prepares for well in advance.

"Why does it need to cut corners on procurement procedures?" Casiño said.

The summit was originally scheduled late 2006 but bad weather was used as a reason to move it to January 2007.

Casiño said there was no "man-made or natural calamity which required immediate action in order to prevent the loss of life or property to justify a negotiated procurement."

He said that in a DPWH memorandum dated June 23, 2006, Public Works Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. authorized the implementation of projects through "negotiated procurement" stating as reason the lack of time for preparations.

"This also reveals something very fishy happened prior, during and after the 12th Asean Leaders' Summit in Cebu. We should not let those involved go scot-free," Casiño said.

Casiño said Bayan Muna got hold of the COA report in September this year.

"We had the report studied," Casiño said.

## Cebu customs take falls amid reports of smuggling

By Jolene R. Bulambot  
Inquirer Visayas

**CEBU CITY**—THE COLLECTION of duties and taxes from imported goods in the port of Cebu fell by almost 2 percent amid reports of the continued smuggling of cars through the city port.

Figures released by the customs bureau here said the port of Cebu fell short of its target revenue in 2007 by 1.95 percent, or about P83.4 million.

Carlos Corsiga, chief of the assessment division of the Bureau of Customs, on Thursday said that the port of Cebu collected only P4 191 billion from January until November while its target was P4.275-billion for the same period.

However, Corsiga said the Cebu port collections for the 11-month period registered a 13.8-percent increase when compared to the P3 683 billion collections for the same period in 2006.

He explained that the port of Cebu did not meet the target due to the appreciation of the peso against the dollar.

### Peso blamed

When the target collection for the year 2007 was set, the peso-dollar exchange rate was pegged at P48, he said.

The rate is now a little above P40 per dollar.

But Corsiga said he is confident that the bureau could meet the P4.6-billion target set for this year.

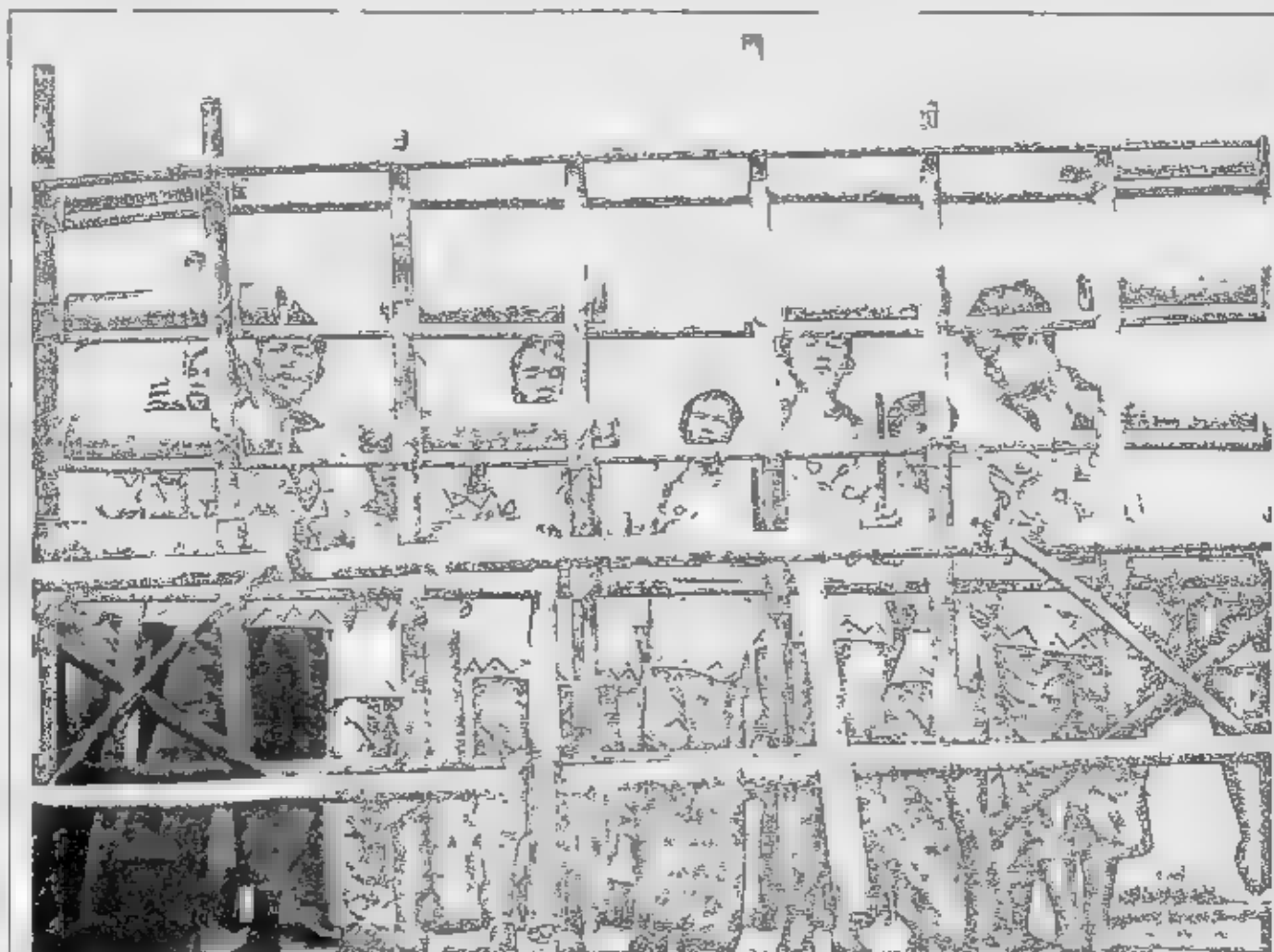
For December alone, the bureau has a target collection of P380 million. As of Dec. 21, the bureau has a ready collected P270 million, Corsiga added.

Florante Ricarte, assistant chief of the assessment division, said that there was also a dip in the volume of shipment, particularly in October this year.

Ricarte said that the imports of the shipment went down to 128,085 metric tons in October from 238,754 metric tons in June.

However, in November, the bureau recovered when 173,208 metric tons of coal, liquefied petroleum gas, ammonium and potassium sulfate arrived, Ricarte said.

The customs bureau was asked to investigate the continued smuggling of cars through Cebu following the seizure of 84 sports and luxury cars in Makati recently that were brought in through Cebu.



**BAMBOO CAPITAL**

Students make use of bamboo for music instruments during the Tultugan Festival in Mazin, Southern Leyte, a feast to celebrate the many uses of bamboo.

ARNOLD ALPACEN/INQUIRER VISAYAS

## MILF awaits notice on talks' resumption

**COTABATO CITY**—THE MORO Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) continues to cling to hopes peace talks would resume with the government soon.

"We are patiently waiting but definitely we can't accept the draft memorandum of agreement because of insertions," Ghadzali Jaafar, MILF vice chair for political affairs, told the Inquirer.

The talks have been suspended after the MILF peace panel, headed by Mohagher Iqbal, did not show up during exploratory talks last Dec. 14 in Malaysia.

In that meeting, the MILF learned that the government peace panel, headed by ex general Rodolfo Garcia, inserted

the term "constitutional process" in the draft agreement on ancestral domain.

Jaafar said there was already an "agreement in principle" that no plebiscite is needed in areas where the population was predominantly Bangsamoro.

Jaafar said the draft has two categories. He explained that in

"Category A" are areas dominated by Muslims in Mindanao that would automatically form part of the proposed Bangsamoro Juridical Entity, while "Category B" contains areas with a mixture of Muslim and non-Muslim residents where a plebiscite would be needed. Edwin O. Fernandez, Inquirer Mindanao



A SENATOR and a Senate staffer examine a P100,000 bundle of P1,000 bills that Panlilio brought with him at a hearing on money changing hands in Malabanan.

INQUIRER PHOTO



# Poll: Pinoys see more hope in 2008

NINE OUT OF 10 FILIPINO adults (91 percent) will enter Year 2008 with hope rather than fear, according to a recent Social Weather Stations survey.

Since 2000, majority of Pinoys have been hopeful about the year to come, with hope levels ranging from 81 percent in December 2004 to 95 percent in November 2002.

On the other hand, New Year hope levels in Germany gathered by annual polls—after which the SWS survey question on hope was patterned—has

yet to exceed 58 percent since 1991.

The Fourth Quarter 2007 Social Weather Survey, conducted from Nov. 30 to Dec. 3, found that high hopes for the coming year existed in all areas—95 percent in Metro Manila, 94 percent in the Visayas, 91 percent in the rest of Luzon, and 87 percent in Mindanao.

Metro Manila recorded its highest New Year hope level (95 percent) since 2002, when 92 percent of Metro Manilans were hopeful about the year ahead.

The region's current hope level is eight percentage points higher than last year's (87 percent).

In Mindanao, however, hopefulness declined from 90 percent in 2006 to 87 percent this year. Hope levels were unchanged in the Visayas and the rest of Luzon.

Survey respondents were given the question, "Ang darating na taon ba ay mayong sasabuhagin na may pag-asa o pangamba (Will you enter the coming year with hope or with fear)?"

New Year hope was down

among members of the ABC socioeconomic classes, from 92 percent in 2006 to 88 percent in 2007. Interestingly, classes ABC registered the lowest hope level this year, compared to class D (92 percent) and the very poor class E (91 percent).

The same survey found that the top resolutions for Year 2008 were to have a better family life (12 percent) and to work harder, look for work or venture into business (11 percent). The latter was the top response in Metro Manila (19 percent).

A quarter of the respondents did not have a New Year's resolution.

Other resolutions were: to have a better life (eight percent), to improve attitude or become a better person (eight percent), to have better health or live longer (seven percent); to stop smoking, drinking or gambling (six percent), and to control temper (five percent).

The top resolutions for men were to stop smoking, drinking or gambling (12 percent) and to work harder, look for work or

venture into business (12 percent).

The top response among women was to have a better family life (15 percent).

The non-commissioned Fourth Quarter 2007 Social Weather Survey used face-to-face interviews of 1,200 respondents divided into random samples of 300 each in Metro Manila, balance of Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. Sampling error margin was plus-minus three percent. *Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research*

## SMART turns Araneta Center into a FREE WiFi hotzone.

Leading wireless services provider Smart Communications, Inc. (SMART) recently tied up with Araneta Center Inc. (ACI) to explore solutions and technologies that will provide Wireless Fidelity (WiFi) Internet service for Araneta Center in Quezon City.

SMART shall provide free Wireless Fidelity Service — also known as hotzoning — to areas around the 35-hectare Araneta Center, home to some of the finest shopping, dining and entertainment establishments in the metropolis. Hotzones are venues that offer WiFi access making it possible for people to use their laptops, PDAs or dual-mode phones to access the Internet.

"The service will enable Araneta Center to offer free access to the Internet to people visiting the area which averages more than a million transients daily. It will allow them to experience greater convenience by using this free Internet access to check their email, chat with their

friends and update their blogs and social networking sites while on-the-go," says Danilo J. Mojica, head of SMART's Wireless Consumer Division.

SMART's hotzoning feature will be available for free at Gateway Mall and in the perimeters of Araneta Coliseum, Shopwise, Araneta Center and in the area of Ali Mall (along Times Square and General McArthur Avenue).

"People visiting the Araneta Center can easily connect to the world wide web to work or browse with Wi-Fi-enabled devices while in a coffee shop, restaurant or in any establishment within the area," says Grace Magno, SVP-Marketing of Araneta Group.

"Establishments around Araneta Center with high sit-in traffic would also benefit from hotzoning since consumers tend to stay in coffee shops or restaurants and purchase drink or food items as

they work," Magno adds.

SMART's hotzoning of the Araneta Center marks another consumer-oriented innovation from the cellular leader. Several other services, such as SMART Money financial solutions, are in the pipeline and will provide the Araneta Group and their customers with connectivity, mobility and access to other innovative technologies.

"Our leadership position puts us in the best place to understand and serve the rapidly evolving needs of our customers. SMART provides not only cutting-edge connectivity, but also advances in providing information, entertainment and transaction technologies that make life more convenient for all," Mojica says.

For more information, log on to [www.aranetacenter.net](http://www.aranetacenter.net) or [www.gatewaymall.com.ph](http://www.gatewaymall.com.ph)

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# Doc charged for alleged botched operation

## NBI files case of reckless imprudence resulting in homicide

By Tina G. Santos

THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION HAS charged a doctor of a private hospital in Manila for an alleged botched operation.

Charged in the Manila Prosecutor's Office with reckless imprudence resulting in homicide was Dr. Natalio Albaña Jr.

Police said the doctor's office is located at the Medical Arts Center Building

II, Manila Doctors Hospital on United Nations Avenue, Ermita in Manila.

Complainant Erlinda Ramos of Camella Street, Vista Verde South, Mambog, Bacoor, Cavite, said her husband Antonio Ramos Jr. died apparent-

ly as a result of the incomplete removal of a ruptured appendix.

### Denial

Albaha, however, denied the accusations, and said he conducted the oper-

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\* based on activated accounts as of September 30, 2007



# LRT, MRT to close early on Dec. 31

## 700 new policemen deployed to Metro Manila for New Year

By Riza T. Oichondra

THE LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT (LRT) and Metro Rail Transit (MRT) will close earlier than usual on Dec. 31.

Thus was announced separately by the LRT Authority (LRTA) and MRT Authority (MRTA).

The last trip of LRT Line 1 from Baclaran to Monumento will be at 8 p.m., while the last coach for the Monumento-Baclaran route is 8:30 p.m.

Line 2's last trip from Santolan to Recto will be at 7:30 p.m. while the one from Recto to Santolan will be at 8 p.m.

The MRT, on the other hand, will close at 9:30 p.m. The last train will leave the North Edsa station at 8:29 p.m. while the last trip from the Taft station will leave at 8:59 p.m.

On Jan. 1, MRT operations will start at 7:30 a.m. and close at 10:30 p.m. The last trip from North Edsa will leave at 9:39 p.m., while the last train from Taft station will leave at 10:07 p.m.

LRTA administrator Mel Robles said there were fewer passengers on New Year's eve.

"Our data show that fewer people take the trains on Dec. 31. Normal operations will resume promptly," he added.

Apart from minimizing revenue losses due to a decline in passenger volume on Dec. 31, the LRT and MRT said closing early would benefit employees, who could go home early to greet the New Year.

The free time will also be used for maintenance work on the trains.

By Julie M. Aurelio

SEVEN HUNDRED POLICE RECRUITS will be deployed as members of foot and mobile police patrol teams all over Metro Manila for the New Year.

The new members of the Philippine National Police took their oath of office yesterday morning at Camp Bagong Diwa.

National Capital Region Police Office director Geary Barias said the rookie cops would be assigned to Metro Manila's five police districts, as part of the police's security measures for the New Year celebration.

Barias warned the rookies that their status would be temporary. "In due time, if you incur derogatory or criminal records,

you will be terminated from the service and will face possible criminal charges," he added.

The recruits will undergo the Public Safety Basic Recruit Course at the National Capital Region Training School.

Out of the 1,204 applicants, only the 700 passed the mandatory requirements for the 2007 recruitment program.

Senior Supt. Daniel Macatang Jr., regional personnel and records division chief, said the recruits passed a stringent screening process that involved physical agility, neuro-psychiatric examination, drug tests, medical, dental and physical exams.

Of the 700 recruits, 60 were women.

Most of the applicants were

graduates of criminology courses, as well as banking and finance, commerce and computer courses, Macatang noted.

Earlier, Barias ordered the five police districts in Metro Manila to seal government-issued firearms with tape to help officials monitor the indiscriminate firing of guns.

Barias also ordered additional checkpoints in vital areas such as the Light Rail Transit, Metro Rail Transit, shopping malls and bus terminals.

Police in Metro Manila remain on heightened alert until after the holidays.

Though half of the police force were allowed to go on leave, they were told they could be recalled anytime.

## Lim adopts 'zero vendor' policy for '08

By Allison W. Lopez

MANILA MAYOR ALFREDO Lim announced yesterday that vendors would no longer be allowed on the city's major roads this coming year.

Lim has adopted a "zero vendor" policy for 2008.

Beginning Jan. 8, the mayor said a month-long clearing operations would be undertaken to remove thousands of vendors, including those on sidewalks, on Roxas Boulevard, Quezon Blvd., Rizal Avenue, Taft Ave., and the whole stretch of Recto (from Legarda to North Harbor).

The move would dismantle well-known flea markets in Plaza Miranda, Carriedo and Divisoria.

"We have to clean up all the districts of Manila but we have

to do it phase by phase, so we will start with the major roads. Obstructions of any kind will not be allowed," Lim said.

The mayor added that he has had enough of hawkers who violated concessions given to them, including the 1x1 meter allotment per stall on sidewalks.

"I'm tired of explaining that the vendors do not follow the 1x1 meter regulation. They don't just sell, they also make the streets their homes. We can't go on like this," he said.

A 24-hour "pedestrian mall" similar to Hong Kong's famous Night Market, Lim said, would be developed for displaced vendors at Muelle de la Industria from Del Pan Extension to McArthur Bridge.

"We will open Escolta, light it up, and turn it into a pedestrian mall. This is where we will re-

locate the vendors so the streets will be cleared and returned to motorists," he said.

City-owned idle properties would also be utilized to accommodate hawkers and create bazaar areas, the mayor added.

Lim said he was not "anti-vendor," adding that they would be better off in designated areas where they will not be harassed by police.

"We can't play hide and seek with the vendors anymore. By removing them, unscrupulous policemen will lose the opportunity to 'protect' them," he said.

He said he was lenient with the vendors during the holidays, but in January, after the feasts of the Black Nazarene in Quiapo and Sto. Niño in Tondo, Lim said the hawkers would have no more excuse to stay on the streets.



## Back to basics as Las Piñas welcomes the New Year

LAS PIÑAS MAYOR VERGEL "Nene" Aguilar urged residents

of the city to use only merry-making devices made of indigenous materials instead of harmful firecrackers and pyrotechnics to welcome the New Year.

The mayor suggested the use of tin cans, torotor (trumpets) and bamboo cannons, saying the use of indigenous materials for festive occasions is less danger-

ous. These are also inexpensive and are environment friendly since they do not pollute the air and leave tons of litter when the celebrations are over, he added.

Aguilar also ordered City police chief Senior Supt. Amando Clifton Empiso to ensure that only authorized firecrackers and pyrotechnic products are sold in the markets to prevent any accidents.

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I believe Mayor Rody Duterte

MON, I SWEAR I HAD NOTHING to do with the death of (radio commentator) Fernando Lintuan," Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte told me.

Rody (that's how he spells his name) was commenting on insinuations that he had a hand in the assassination of the fiery commentator.

"Why should I when I'm a creation of the media? I have always been a friend of media," said Duterte, whom close friends also call Digong.

Rody or Digong has often denied he had a hand in the killing of hardened criminals in the city by the so-called DDS or Davao Death Squad.

"Ay, ayaw na lang na, ay (Ah, let's not talk about that)," he would say when I would ask him about the mysterious deaths of drug pushers, killers and rapists in his city.

But yesterday he was vehement in denying insinuations that he had something to do with the killing of Lintuan.

I've known Duterte for years. I know if he's pulling my leg or telling the truth by the way he reacts to my banter or questions.

I am totally convinced he had nothing to do with Lintuan's death.

Rody Duterte was among a few friends—another is Puerto Princessa Mayor Edward Hagedorn—who tried to come to my rescue while I was being bat-

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

attered by the DDS

Before Lintuan's murder, Nograles kept quiet about the incidents. Why denounce the killings only now?

For policemen or military men who want to greet New Year's eve with a bang with the use of their guns, here's a step-by-step way to do it.

First, be sure your ammunition is in good condition. It might not explode because too much exposure to the elements, like rain water and wind, may cause the gunpowder to harden. See to it that your ammo's primer isn't only or rusty, which is the cause of malfunction.

Second, check your gun. Is the firing pin sharp enough to make a dent in the primer? Is the hammer strong enough to strike the firing pin?

If your ammo and gun are OK, then you can go to the third step, which is cocking your gun so the ammo will load into the chamber.

With the gun cocked, and with yourself as target, press the trigger.

Friend, you're better off dead than the innocent civilian or civilians who might be hit in the head by the bullet or bullets you fired into the air while in a drunken state.

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Doc charged for alleged ...

ation according to the patient's signs and symptoms.

An investigation showed that the victim entered the Manila Doctors Hospital on Nov. 24, 2006.

The operation was conducted by the respondent, assisted by Dr. Nomer dela Cruz, the NBI said.

The victim was discharged on Nov. 27 and was instructed to return for a checkup on Dec. 2.

But when he returned, the victim reportedly complained that he continued to experience stomach pains.

Severe pains

On the night of Dec. 2, the victim complained of severe stomach

pains and was rushed to the San Juan de Dios Hospital in Pasay City.

A surgeon who had examined him found that the victim's ruptured appendix was causing the problem.

New operation

The victim underwent another operation and was transferred to the hospital's Intensive Care Unit.

Ramos was reported to have suffered from multiple organ failure as a result of an infection.

He died the following day.

Fragments

An autopsy by the NBI Medico Legal Division found that the victim died of peritonitis or inflammation

of the membrane that lined the abdomen.

The NBI Medico Legal report said it appeared only fragments of the appendix were removed during the first operation, apparently resulting in an infection.

Checkup

Albana said that when Ramos was subjected to a checkup on Dec. 2, he refused to be confined for further evaluation.

Dela Cruz, who also appeared at the NBI office, however, claimed he was just an assistant of Albana. He said he simply watched the respondent who made all the decisions during the operation.



# Fukuda brings new warmth to China-Japan ties

BEIJING—CHINA AND JAPAN MADE no major breakthroughs in resolving a row over natural resources in the East China Sea on Friday, but a visit by Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda signaled a new warmth in bilateral relations.

Eleven rounds of talks have failed to settle a long-running dispute between the two Asian giants over how to exploit natural gas in the East China Sea and where the dividing line between their exclusive economic zones in the area should lie.

Japan is concerned that China, which is piping gas from an area close to what Tokyo sees as its own economic zone, could be siphoning resources from geological structures that stretch into the Japanese zone.

"Talks will continue and we want to resolve the issue as soon as possible," Fukuda told a joint news conference after a two-and-a-half-hour meeting with Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao.

Both Fukuda and Wen said talks on the gas field dispute made "certain

progress" but did not elaborate.

Wen said the two countries had the will to develop and turn the East China Sea into an "ocean of peace and friendship," and he agreed with Fukuda that spring had come to bilateral ties.

Fukuda joined a growing chorus of opposition to Taiwan's contentious plan to hold a referendum on UN membership, a comment intended to placate China.

"If it leads to a unilateral change of the (political) status quo (between China and Taiwan), we cannot support it," Fukuda said. "We do not desire tensions stemming from Taiwan's referendum."

Beijing insists that the rest of the world treat self-ruled Taiwan as a province of China, and has long threatened to attack the island if it formally declares statehood. It would see passage of the referendum as tantamount to a declaration of independence.

In a light moment, Fukuda said he had suggested to Wen that they meet for a game of catch but said he had yet



JAPANESE Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda (left) toasts with Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao after a signing ceremony in Beijing's Great Hall of the People, Dec. 28.

to hear back from his host. Wen, who pitched in a baseball game during a visit to Japan in April, replied that he

was ready to play any time.

Fukuda was holding separate talks with parliament chief Wu Bangguo

and President Hu Jintao later on Friday. Talks were to focus on economic, environmental and energy cooperation, featuring transfers of Japan's waste-cutting, energy-saving and pollution-free technology.

Ties between the two neighbors have warmed in the past year after a long chill during the 2001-2006 term of Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi. He paid repeated visits to Tokyo's Yasukuni war shrine, which critics see as a symbol of Japan's past militarism.

The 71-year-old Fukuda, whose father as prime minister in 1978 clinched a milestone peace treaty with Beijing, has vowed not to visit Yasukuni while in office.

Japan remains Asia's biggest economic power, with a \$4.34-trillion economy in 2006, against China's \$2.67 trillion, World Bank data show. Tokyo has long sought to boost its diplomatic clout commensurate with its economic might.

Reuters

## Obama hammers Clinton as polls show tight race



OBAMA at a campaign stop Dec. 27 in Des Moines, Iowa.

DES MOINES, IOWA—BARACK OBAMA rejected rival Hillary Clinton's vow to forge change Thursday, as polls showed a tight Democratic White House race in Iowa, a week before the state's leadoff nominating clash.

In a soaring new speech, the Democratic senator sharpened his attacks on the former first lady, as the foes crossed the ice-bound midwestern state in a tussle for votes before next Thursday's curtain-raising party caucuses.

The assassination of Pakistan's ex-prime minister Benazir Bhutto meanwhile cast a tragic shadow over the campaign trail, and sparked fresh questions about which candidate was most qualified to wage the "war on terror."

"You can't at once argue that you are the master of a broken system in Washington and offer yourself as the person to change it," Obama said in a stump speech clearly targeting Clinton.

"You can't fall behind conventional thinking on issues as profound as war and offer yourself as the leader who is best prepared to chart a new and better course for America," he said in Des Moines.

Clinton had Wednesday broken a fragile Christmas truce between the rivals, by jabbing at Obama's "politics of hope" rhetoric, arguing that only a candidate steeped in Washington could wage a battle to change it.

"I am not coming to you with

promises about what I think I can do or hopes that together we can achieve some of these ends... but with a track record and an understanding of how difficult the process is," Clinton said.

Change is the key theme of the 2008 election for Democrats, desperate to recapture the White House after eight years of President George W. Bush, and national security, social and economic policies they abhor.

Clinton appears to have stabilized her campaign after a volley of stumbles before the Christmas holiday, but faces a fierce fight with Obama, and former party 2004 vice presidential nominee John Edwards in Iowa.

A new Los Angeles Times/Bloomberg poll showed Clinton leading Edwards by 31 to 25 percent among likely Iowa caucus goers with Obama at 22 percent.

Among all Iowa Democrats, Clinton was just 29 to 26 up on Obama with Edwards on 25 percent. The polls had a four percentage point margin of error.

Among likely voters in New Hampshire, which holds its primary on Jan. 8, Obama led with 32 percent ahead of Clinton on 30 percent.

On the Republican side, Mike Huckabee, the ordained Baptist preacher who shot into the lead in Iowa after mobbing the crucial evangelical Christian bloc, returned to the state.

AFP

## Key events of 2007

**PAKISTAN POLITICAL CRISIS**—Pakistan is beset by violence in July after the military storms an Islamabad mosque taken over by militant Islamists. On Oct. 18, with pressure rising for new elections, former premier Benazir Bhutto returns from self-exile. A suicide bombing kills 139 people during her homecoming parade. On Nov. 3, President Pervez Musharraf imposes a state of emergency, and then sets elections for January. The United States, which has built its "war on terror" on an alliance with Pakistan, expresses concern that the country's nuclear weapons could fall into the hands of a radical Islamic regime.

**BURMA PROTESTS**—AT LEAST 15 people die and 3,000 are jailed in September when Burma's military and police break up prodemocracy protests, which see Buddhist monks lead 100,000 people in the streets of Rangoon on successive days. The United States, which has a trade and investment ban on Burma (Myanmar), and the European Union impose limited sanctions. U.N. envoy Ibrahim Gambari seeks to launch dialogue between the military regime and opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

**IRAQ WAR**—ON FEB. 3 A SUICIDE bomber in a truck packed with one ton of explosives kills at least 130 people and injures more than 300 in a popular Shiite neighborhood of Baghdad. More than 400 people are slaughtered in four suicide truck bomb attacks in northern Iraq on Aug. 16. The number of U.S. forces killed in the conflict approaches 4,000 as 2007 closes, although overall violence appears to be falling. The United States blames Iran for much of the mayhem and also accuses Iran of seeking nuclear weapons, although a U.S. intelligence report at the year's end goes against that accusation.

**BANGLADESH CYCLONE**—NEARLY 3,300 die in Bangladesh in a Nov. 15 cyclone, with hundreds of thousands left homeless. More than 3,200 people are also killed and 25 million of others marooned and displaced in the worst floods in decades across South Asia—Nepal, India and Bangladesh—between June and September caused by heavy monsoon rains and snow melt.

**US ELECTION**—RIVAL CONTENDERS jockey for position ahead of the U.S. presidential election in November 2008, with Hillary Clinton vying with Barack Obama in the Democratic race and former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani with former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee for the Repub-

licans. All candidates have embarked on an exhausting sprint of rallies and TV debates ahead of their first date with voters at primary contests in January.

**PUTIN**—THE PARTY OF RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin wins a landslide victory in legislative elections. Putin says he is ready to become prime minister if his ally Dmitry Medvedev wins a March 2 presidential election, an arrangement that analysts say could leave Putin wielding major power. Time magazine names Putin its person of the year in recognition of the Russian leader's role in making Moscow "a critical linchpin of the 21st century."

**WORLD ECONOMY**—THE WORLD economy is rattled by a crisis in the U.S. property market, with struggling borrowers defaulting en masse on mortgage payments, causing a credit crunch and wider concerns about the world's biggest economy. The dollar staggers from record low to record low and stock markets tumble. World oil prices come in November close to the 100-dollar mark on global supply concerns. Prices ease after Opec decides to keep its output levels unchanged.

**CHINA'S RED HOT ECONOMY**—China's red hot economy continues to expand, as the Asian giant's readers worry about how to prevent it from overheating and to curb inflation. Europe and the United States urge Beijing to move faster on exchange flexibility to boost the weak yuan, arguing that it is giving Chinese exporters an advantage. China continues to increase its influence by pouring investment into the resource-rich African continent, as it seeks raw materials to fuel growth.

**PEACE PRIZE**—THE NOBEL Peace Prize is awarded jointly to a U.N. climate change body and former U.S. Vice President Al Gore on Oct. 12, raising the profile of the fight against global warming. In July pop stars, politicians and Hollywood celebrities drum home the dangers of global warming in a series of Live Earth concerts spanning the globe.

**MIDDLE EAST PEACE**—IN November, Israelis and Palestinians agree at a conference in Annapolis, Maryland, to restart negotiations with the goal of creating a Palestinian state by late 2008, but the effort is greeted with skepticism in the Middle East. The Gaza Strip descends into factional fighting after Hamas takes the area under its control after overrunning Fatah loyalists in June.

AFP



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# The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

## Bhutto's end prophetic of cursed dynasties

By Simon Denyer

NEW DELHI—BENAZIR BHUTTO ONLY ENTERED politics after her father was executed by the military.

On Thursday she was assassinated, a depressingly predictable end for a member of one of South Asia's seemingly cursed political dynasties.

Powerful families from the Bhuttos of Pakistan to the Gandhis of India and the Bandaranaike family of Sri Lanka have dominated politics in this diverse and polyglot region since independence from Britain.

But none have escaped tragedy at the hands of rebels, extremists or ambitious military leaders.

It was Zulfikar Ali Bhutto who founded Pakistan's troubled dynasty. He became the country's first popularly elected prime minister but was toppled by the army in 1977 and later hanged.

Both his sons died in mysterious circumstances.

His daughter Benazir, a former prime minister, was lucky to survive when a suicide attack on her motorcade killed nearly 150 people as she returned to Pakistan in October after eight years in exile.

Later that month she paid an emotional return to her father's grave in their ancestral village in southern Pakistan.

"There is still danger of attack, but Allah can protect everyone and I am not scared," she said.

In India, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was shot by her Sikh bodyguards as she walked in her garden in 1984, cradled by her Italian daughter-in-law Sonia as she lay dying.

The tragedy propelled her son and Sonia's husband Rajiv into politics and into her shoes as head of government.

He in turn was blown up by a female suicide bomber in 1991 at an election rally.

With grim prescience, Sonia wrote she had "fought like a tiger" to prevent Rajiv entering politics.



BENAZIR Bhutto (center) placing rose petals Oct. 27 on the grave of her father, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who was himself hanged in 1977. AP

After he died, she desperately wanted to stay out of politics, only to yield in 1998 after enormous pressure from the Congress party. Today she is India's most powerful politician.

"That's part of political lives, and my mother-in-law and my husband lived and died for the country," she said in an interview in 2004. "I don't believe they wished to die in any other way."

This crowded region has faced an array of violent uprisings by groups who felt excluded

by democracy. The military has often felt it could do a better job of ruling than politicians.

That's helped to make politics a risky career path.

"In this region there is this struggle between the ballot and the bullet," said Mahesh Rangarajan, a political analyst and Delhi University history professor. "There are elements and groups who wish to settle political scores by ending debate."

The murders have ironically helped sustain those dynasties

the assassins tried to destroy, propelling sometimes reluctant heirs into the limelight, giving them both a powerful sense of a legacy to be fulfilled and a wave of sympathy on which to ride.

In Sri Lanka, then Ceylon, Prime Minister Solomon Bandaranaike was killed by a Buddhist monk in 1959.

His wife Sirimavo succeeded him to become the world's first female prime minister.

His daughter Chandrika Kumaratunga, also became prime minister and then president, only to lose sight in her right eye after an assassination attempt by suspected Tamil Tiger rebels in 1999.

In Bangladesh, which split from Pakistan in 1971, the country's two leading politicians had similarly violent starts to their political careers.

Sheikh Hasina entered politics after her father, independence leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, was killed in a military coup in 1975.

The man who came to power after that coup, Gen. Ziaur Rahman, was himself killed in an abortive military mutiny in 1981. His wife Begum Khaleda

Zia was not daunted, giving up life as a housewife to join politics herself.

She became the Muslim country's first female prime minister in 1991, before bitter rival Sheikh Hasina took over the top job in 1996. Today, both have been detained by a military-backed government and face prosecution for corruption.

It is not only dynasties which have suffered.

Mohandas K. Gandhi, also known as the Mahatma or Great Soul, was assassinated in 1948. Pakistan's first Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan was shot and killed in 1951 in Rawalpindi, the same city in which Benazir Bhutto died on Thursday.

In a family interview with India's Outlook magazine in Dubai last year, Benazir said she hoped her three children would choose a different career path.

"Even though I come from a political family with a strong sense of duty to my country I would strongly advise them to stay away from politics, to serve the country in other ways," she was quoted as saying. "As a doctor, a social worker, anything."

Reuters

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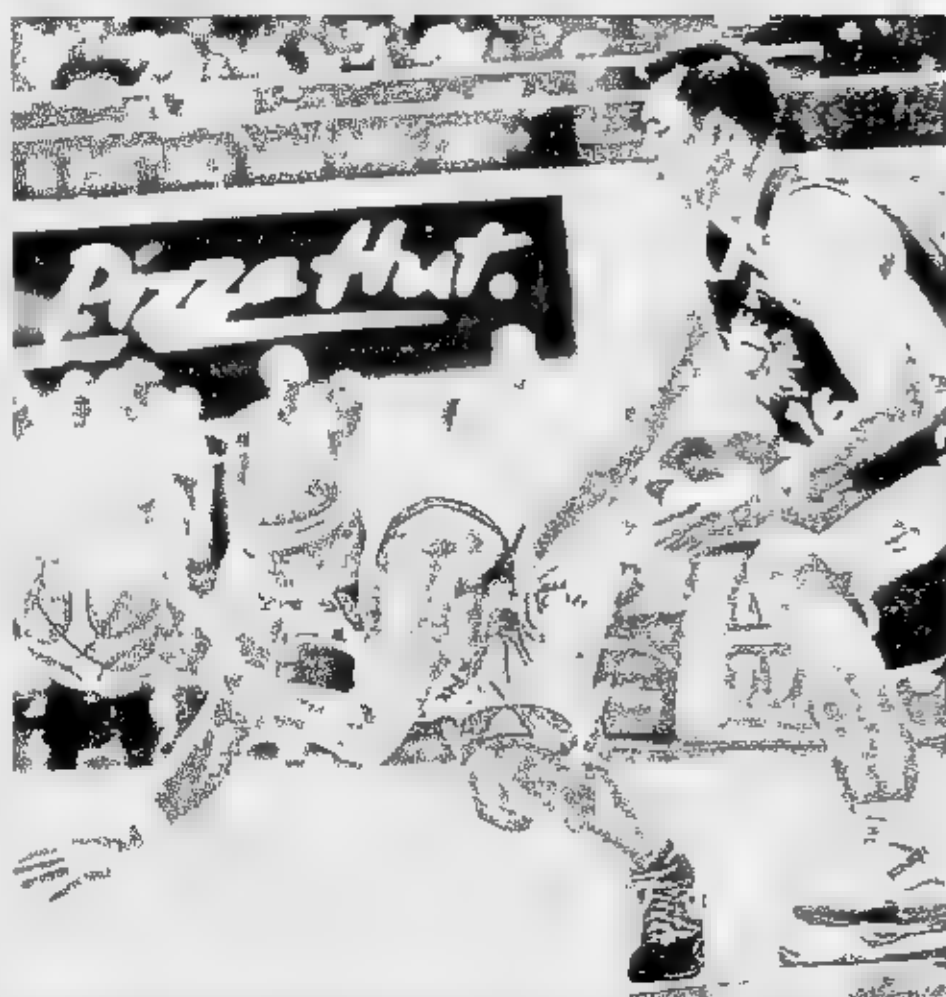
## SPORTS

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WELCOAT'S Nic Belasco (left) taps the ball away from a dribbling Dennis Espino of Sta. Lucia in the final quarter of last night's game.

# Hot Realtors drain fire out of Dragons

By Musong R. Castillo

STA. LUCIA WOKE UP FROM A FIRST-HALF slumber and ran Welcoat to the ground to complete a come-from-behind 107-93 victory that ousted the Dragons from the Smart PBA Philippine Cup last night at the Araneta Coliseum.

The Realtors battled back from an 18-point second-quarter deficit and from 11 down at the half to win for the sixth straight time and claim second place, which got coach Boyet Fernandez so excited he offended his Welcoat counterpart with an unnecessary end-game timeout.

Sta. Lucia held the Dragons without a field goal in a crucial five-minute span early in the fourth quarter to zoom to a 13-point lead heading into the final 3:37 which, for all intents and purposes, already meant the game.

And with possession with 29 seconds to go and a nine-point lead, Fernandez called for time, which the Welcoat players and coach Leo Austria felt was adding insult to injury.

Austria then reacted by calling his own timeout with 4.6 seconds to go and put some color in what turned out to be an anticlimactic endgame.

"He (Fernandez) never said sorry, he took my hand, so I shook it," Austria, whose boys hit the showers early for the third straight tournament, told scribes later. "It was clear as day that they had the game won. He didn't need to call a timeout."

"My players reacted and I, as the leader, needed to show them that I was with them. That's why I called our own timeout," Austria added. "His assistant (Cholo Martin) approached me after the game and said sorry, adding that their coach is a rookie."

Lost in what became an unsporting endgame was the brilliance of Marlou Aquino, who scored seven of his eight

STANDINGS	W	L
Purefoods	11	4
Sta. Lucia	10	6
Red Bull	9	6
Alaska	9	7
Talk 'N Text	8	7
Magnolia	8	7
Ginebra	7	9
Coca-Cola	6	9
Air21	6	9
Welcoat	3	13

GAMES JAN. 4
(Cebu Astro Dome)
4:50 p.m.—Talk 'N Text vs Alaska
7:20 p.m.—Red Bull vs Barangay Ginebra

points in a telling 13-0 run that turned an 84-all game into a 97-84 lead for the Realtors, who are now at 10-6.

Kelly Williams led the Realtors with 20 points and 13 rebounds, while Ryan Araña, chosen third overall in the draft, scored all his 12 points in the middle two periods and also wound up with a

career-high 13 rebounds.

Welcoat lost its ninth straight game and dropped to 3-13 overall, which meant another early vacation despite having two games left in its schedule. A concession the Dragons earned for their early elimination is a second import in the next tournament.

"I don't see it as disrespectful," Fernandez explained in justifying his action. "We had seven seconds left in the shot clock and I wanted to make sure that we get a shot off."

The Dragons shot 55 percent from the field in the first half and took a 59-48 lead into the third after playing fluidly and baffling the Realtors no end.

Welcoat, which won just a total of seven games in getting eliminated in its first two tournaments last season, got 15 points from Rob Wainwright in the first two quarters with guard Rob Dulay scattering 13.

The scores:
First Game
STA. LUCIA 107—Williams 20, Omolon 19, Reyes 12, Yeo 12, Espino 11, Mendoza 10, Aquino 6, Miranda 7, Daa 4, Coronel 2, Gonzales 2
WELCOAT 93—Belasco 16, Arana 15, Wainwright 15, Sta. Maria 14, Dulay 13, Manito 5, Ballesteros 4, Ibanez 4, Tangkay 4, Reyes 1
Quarters: 23-31 48-59, 79-74, 107-93

## Olympic venues all done but one

BEIJING—COMPETITION VENUES FOR next year's Beijing Olympics have been completed according to plan, an official said Friday, with the only outstanding project—the 91,000-seat National Stadium—scheduled to be finished by March.

Construction for the Games that begin Aug. 8 next year have hummed along, with workers laboring around the clock. Unlike Athens, there will be no last-minute scramble to finish venues.

"This year, venue construction was under way according to plan," said Jiang Xiaoyu, spokesman and executive vice president for the Games. "All the new venues were finished as scheduled by the end of the year."

Though he did not give specifics, 36 of the 37 venues were to be finished by Dec. 31. The National Stadium, nicknamed the "Bird's Nest" because of its exterior lattice work of enormous twisted beams, was expected to be finished by March.

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# RP's Polymaster Kings get going vs Macau cagers

By Roy Luarda

NANAN CITY, FUJIAN, CHINA—THE depleted Polymaster Kings got a reprieve when they drew lightweight Macau as opening assignment in the Seventh Zheng Cheng Gong Cup here.

Down to nine men, including playing coach Junnel Mendiola, the Kings, representing the Philippines, tackle the smaller Macau five at 8:30 p.m. Friday at the start of the six-nation tournament at the Nanan Stadium.

The non-arrival of Jeffrey Sanders and

Willie Moody, who encountered visa problems, is expected to make things difficult for the Filipinos, who are bidding to extend their reign since the event started in 1999.

Despite the absence of his chief gunners and a burn stomach slowing down power forward Brauho Lim, Mendiola, a former mainstay of the 2001 Southeast Asian Games champion RP team, said the Millennium Basketball League titlists are ready to do battle with the select commercial teams from Macau, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Singapore and host China.

"We'll do our best," said Mendiola. "It's hard but we're determined to win."

Mendiola said the holiday season prevented the team from getting reinforcements in time for the team's departure to this booming city in Fujian province on Thursday.

Other members of the Kings are former University of the East Red Warrior Laz Palaganas, former Bacchus stalwart Reynaldo Mendoza, former Far Eastern University Tamaraw Romie Zagala, former University of Manila Hawk Richard Litonjua, Romel David, Michael Dizon and 6-

foot-5 Fil-Am Michael Andre Burtcher.

After Macau, the Philippines, defending the title won by Johnny Tam-memored squads, will tackle Huarong of Nanan on Saturday, Bumi Kaya (Indonesia) on Dec. 30, Singapore on Dec. 31 and Tong Whye (Hong Kong) on New Year's Day.

The top team after the single-round elimination will emerge champion.

Former FIBA president Carl Chung Menky will be the guest of honor and speaker in Friday's opening ceremony.

Chung and Korean basketball legend Shin Dong-pa will make the ceremonial

toss of the event being held in honor of the late general and hero.

Sports patron Alvin Tai Lian is the head of the RP delegation with Taixin Ming as team leader.

Also with Team Philippines are Robert Milton Calo, assistant team leader; John Utzig, referee; and Fructoso Lraytos, technical official.

The Filipinos are best remembered here when they rallied from a 21-point deficit in the fourth quarter to nip Hong Kong and keep the title first won by the Laguna Lakers in 1999.

## Unsportsmanlike? Bowlers hit out at Balikbayan keg organizer

BOWLERS YESTERDAY DEcried WHAT they called an unfair ruling imposed by the organizer of the annual Balikbayan Santa Claus Invitational Bowling Tournament at the Gameworks in Festival Mall in Alabang.

The tournament was organized by Lucena City Tenpin Bowling Association (LCTBA).

One of the players, a Tenpin Bowling Association of Makati (TBAM) member who requested anonymity, said tournament officials abruptly recalled handicaps assigned to him and several other players after they had already played two games in the qualifying rounds.

Claiming they were not given any reason for the move, the TBAM bowler said he had already posted scores—235 and 207—when told his 10-handicap was being withdrawn.

He said the other players whose handicaps were similarly withdrawn had also posted good scores when told of the decision.

The handicaps were based on the players' averages in the Philippine Bowling Congress which the organizer said he had adopted.

## Pacquiao guns for NCA world derby crown

BOXING SUPERSTAR MANNY PACQUIAO has vowed to add the 2008 National Cockers' Association (NCA) World Championship Derby trophy to his growing collection.

Dubbed the Olympics of Cockfighting, the World Championship Derby slated Jan. 8, 10, and 12, 2008 at the world-class Ruzal Multi-purpose Building in Pasig City, will be a battle among local gamefowl enthusiasts and top breeders from the United States.

Pacquiao will be up against top cockers like Philip Chongbuan, Beboy Uy, who will represent Mindanao, Manolo Lopez of Merako, Pepito Ngo, the tandem of Makati Vice Mayor Nestor Mercado and Lito Orillaza, former Sen. Ramon Revilla Sr. and Jun Marasigan.

Other participants are Joey and Buboy delos Santos of Southern Luzon, Alex Escalona, James Uy, William Go, Alan Siaco and Jet Fernando, who will field imported aces from the US.

Also setting their sights on the trophy hand-crafted by renowned National Artist Eduardo Castrillo are former Sungao congressman Butch Pichay, Jerry Ramos, Ferdie Buensaido and Rey Briones, a businessman from Dubai.

Part of the proceeds of all NCA activities, including the World Championship Derby, go to the organization's college scholarship fund.

By June Navarro

A SPECIAL OLYMPIC BODY THAT will include heads of certain national sports associations is being formed to take a direct hand in the preparation and training of Filipino athletes seeing action in the 2008 Beijing Summer Games.

Philippine Olympic Committee chair Robert Avenajado yesterday said NSA officials whose athletes have qualified in the Games should have direct hand in the preparations for the 2008 Olympiad.

Avenajado lobbied for the inclusion of national sports association (NSA) heads from swimming, taekwondo, boxing and archery in the core group whose function is to map out the country's Olympic gold-medal hunt.

Avenajado, also the president of the Philippine Taekwondo Association, said the leaders of these NSAs should have a direct hand in the implementation of the Olympic task force's programs.

Including himself, Avenajado is suggesting that boxing's Manny Lopez, Mark Joseph of swimming and archery's



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Leonora Bawner should spearhead the Olympic drive along with Philippine Sports Commission chair William "Burch" Ramirez and POC president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco Jr.

Taekwondo-jins Tshomlee Go and Marie Antoinette Rivero, Harry Tañamor of boxing, swimming's Miguel Molina, JB Walsh, Daniel Coakley and Ryan Arabejo and archery's Mark Javier have already qualified for the Olympics.

"Why involve other sports (leaders) in

the preparation if they have nothing to do with it?" Avenajado said. "The people who should comprise the task force are the presidents of the NSAs."

The core group, which also designated weightlifting head Monico Puentevela as chief of mission and bowling's Steve Hontiveros as one of the members, will meet on Jan. 3 to address the concerns of the Olympic dream.

"The participating NSAs should all work together so they will not blame

anybody, especially the PSC, if something went wrong with the campaign," said Avenajado.

He cited the case of athletics whose athletes failed to receive some of the equipment they needed for the recent 24th Southeast Asian Games in Thailand.

"NSA leaders are largely responsible for both the success and the failure of their athletes, so it is just proper that they be included in the decision-making," said Avenajado.

## Macapagal voted Asian shoot exec

KUWAIT—PHILIPPINE SHOOTING PRESIDENT Arturo Macapaga made a big mark off the range recently when he was elected as the first Filipino member of the Asian Shooting Confederation executive committee at the Crowne Plaza Hotel here.

The soft-spoken head of the Philippine National Shooting Association garnered the second highest number of votes among 16 candidates during the general assembly meeting. Only the top eight earned the right to serve a four-year term.

Elected to the executive body with Macapaga were Thailand's Pongpol Adireksarn (Nassat) and Suebchai Chaiyavati (Skeet), Kuwait's Brig. Gen. Ahmoud Al-Dousario, Qatar's Al Mohammed Al-Kuwari, UAE's Ab-

dullah Salem Bin Yaqoub, Japan's Masaru Fuji and Mongolia's Vanchgudorj Oigondemberel.

Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Hmoud Al-Sabah was unanimously re-elected ASP president.

"It's a big honor for our country that I have been voted member of the Asian body's executive committee," said Macapagal, himself a former Olympic shooter and president of the Philippine Olympic Association.

"This gives me the opportunity to keep close tab of the latest developments in the shooting world and thus help our (PNSA) members keep in step with the sport's progress."

During the assembly, Qatar won the right to host the 12th Asian championships in 2011.



PNSA president Art Macapagal receives a plaque of appreciation from ASC head Sheikh Salman Al-Salem Al-Hmoud Al-Sabah.

## Malangasa surprises final Clark criterium field

RODOLFO MALANGASA EMERGED the surprise winner in the Hitachi Criterium Grand Prix national finals as he ruled the Elite Open division at the Clark Freeport over the weekend.

Malangasa, who was never considered a favorite to win, nipped Erickson Obosa in a down-the-wire finish. Tar-

lac's Anthony del Rosario placed third.

Domador Tacu-tacu beat former Tour campaigner Placido Valdez and Bulacan rider Norberto Loya to capture the Elite Masters championship.

Loya earlier ruled the Executive class after besting Jazy Garcia, son of cycling icon Jess Garcia, and Jaime Basilio.

Nilo Estayo of Pozzorubio, Pangasinan, shared the spotlight when he secured the Elite Non-Pro crown, nosing out Quezon City's Dalton Tablizo. Bocos Sur's Ryan Serapio was third.


Team David Salon stamped its class in the women's division with Marita Lucas, Kaye Lopez and Chris Heidi

Navarro making it a 1-2-3 finish.

Clark Development Corp. tourism manager Noemi Garcia and assistant Jay Almaria awarded the winners.


"We hope to come up with better races and bigger prizes in next year's second edition of the races," project director Ric Rodriguez said.

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## SPORTS

## Celtics, Cavs score

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON—PAUL PIERCE scored 37 points and Kevin Garnett added 23 to lead the Boston Celtics to a 104-96 National Basketball Association triumph Thursday over the Seattle SuperSonics.

The victory boosted Boston's NBA-best record to 24-3 and after just under one-third of their 82-game league schedule, the Celtics are on pace to challenge the NBA one-season record of 72-10 set by Chicago.

With the triumph, the Celtics matched their total number of victories from last season.

Garnett also grabbed 14 rebounds and blocked two shots but it was Pierce's season-

high point total, after starting 2-of-11 from the floor that gave the Celtics their third triumph in a row.

Pierce had three three-point shots and 13 points in the third quarter but Boston still clung to only a 70-67 edge before reserve Eddie House scored seven points in a 21-10 Boston run that sealed the triumph.

Boston's Ray Allen returned to Seattle for the first time since a trade to the Celtics last season. A sellout crowd gave Allen a standing ovation but the All-Star guard went 4-of-13 from the field and scored only 10 points.

Rookie Kevin Durant led Seattle with 25 points. The Sonics fell to 8-21 with only Northwest division foe Minnesota at 4-23 below them in the entire league.

In Dallas, LeBron James scored 24 points to help the Cleveland Cavaliers post a scrappy 88-81 road victory over the Mavericks.

James also had eight rebounds and seven assists in a bruising match-up as Cleveland won in Dallas for the first time in seven years.

"I know I can take more pounding than anybody else on the court tonight," James, who went to the foul line 10 times in the first half, told reporters.

"So I've got to continue to be aggressive and if they (the Mavericks) are going to come at us and give hard fouls, I'll give it back."

Zydrunas Ilgauskas added 18 points and 11 rebounds and Larry Hughes contributed 17 points as the Cavaliers won despite shooting only 36.4 percent from the floor while registering a woeful two-of-16 three-point attempts.

In a game where both teams were guilty of poor shooting, Dirk Nowitzki led Dallas with 19 points and 20 rebounds but made only six of 17 shots from the floor.

Josh Howard also had 19 points for the Mavericks, who managed just 36.5 percent of their field-goal attempts.

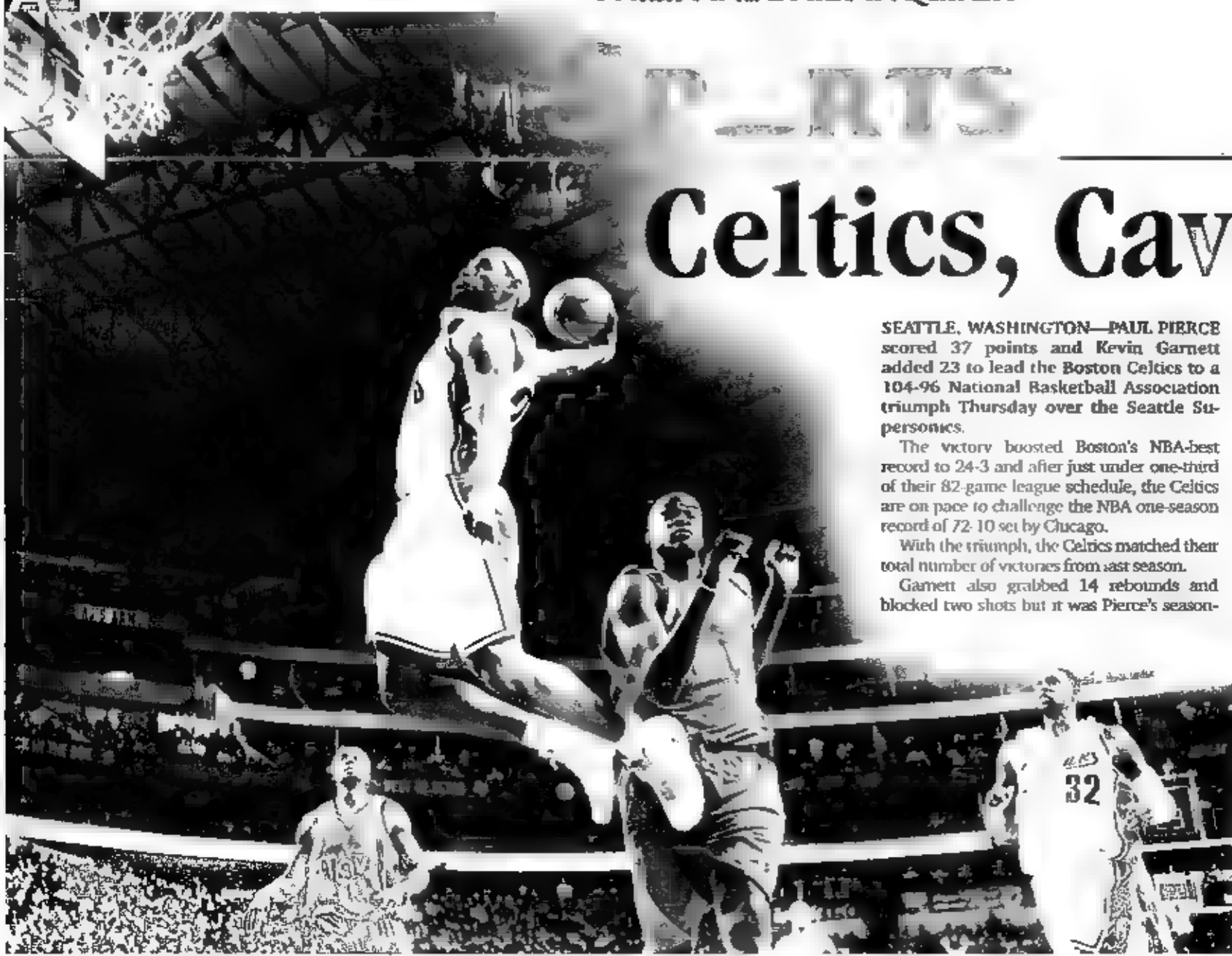
Dallas trimmed a 13-point Cleveland advantage to one in the fourth quarter but could not move into the lead.

"We couldn't get timely stops," Mavericks coach Avery Johnson told reporters.

"Somebody would get an offensive rebound or a wide-open shot and on top of it, we just couldn't really score."

In Los Angeles, Amare Stoudemire scored 30 points and pulled down 15 rebounds in the Phoenix Suns' 108-88 road romp over the Clippers.

AFP Reuters



LEBRON James of the Cleveland Cavaliers, hammered all night by a tough Dallas Mavericks defense, soars for a dunk in a rare uncontested drive to the basket.

## Boston 'savior' Garnett leads All-Star vote

NEW YORK—KEVIN GARNETT, WHO has helped lift the Boston Celtics from the cellar to a 23-3 start, leads fan balloting for the 57th National Basketball Association All-Star Game, the league announced Thursday.

The 31-year-old forward who played in 10 of the past 11 All-Star Games for the Western Conference before being traded from Minnesota before this season has 1,186,690 votes to set the pace among Eastern Conference forwards.

Garnett was the All-Star Game Most Valuable Player in 2003, his 37 points the best total among his All-Star appearances, and was the league MVP in 2004.

Cleveland's LeBron James ranks second overall and among East forwards with 1,005,733 votes to join Garnett in a starting position. Toronto's Chris Bosh is a distant third at 313,983 votes and unlikely to overtake either superstar.

Chinese center Yao Ming of the Houston Rockets is the top vote-getter among non-US players. He leads the Western Conference center balloting with 813,305 votes with Phoenix's Amare



GARNETT REUTERS

Stoudemire second on 463,916.

Yao, 27, was voted an All-Star starter each of the past five years but missed this year's match with an injury. His vote total ranks fifth overall.

Orlando center Dwight Howard leads Eastern Conference big men with 970,778 to stand third overall while fourth overall is Los

Angeles Lakers guard Kobe Bryant, the Western Conference's top vote-getter with 914,716.

## Thomas unsure of Marbury return

NEW YORK—STEPHON MARBURY MIGHT not return to the struggling New York Knicks this season, coach Isiah Thomas said Thursday, a day after saying he expected the star point guard to be back.

With an 8-20 record and the fewest victories in the National Basketball Association's Eastern Conference, the Knicks have been a soap opera of dysfunctional relationships, mainly between Thomas and Marbury.

Marbury was expected to return from bereavement leave Wednesday following the death of his father on Dec. 2 but missed a team flight to Orlando.

He has missed eight of the Knicks' past nine

games and New York has a 1-7 record without him.

The Orlando Magic ripped the Knicks, 110-96, on Wednesday, the fourth loss in a row for the Knicks.

Asked if Marbury would be back this season, Thomas said, "I don't know."

A Knicks club spokesman later said he spoke with Marbury, 30, and was told that he plans to return some time after the new year.

Marbury, averaging 13.6 points and 4.7 assists in 18 games this season, has been a question mark since leaving the team Nov. 13 after Thomas told him that he was being dropped from the starting lineup.



JIM BOYLAN (left) will replace Scott Skiles (middle) as the Chicago Bulls' head coach, but on an interim basis.

## Bulls assistant gets top post for the season

DEERFIELD, ILLINOIS—JIM BOYLAN WAS promoted Thursday to interim head coach of the Chicago Bulls, who fired Scott Skiles on Monday after the National Basketball Association team's disappointing start.

Boylan was in his fourth season as an assistant under Skiles and has 14 years experience in the NBA but none as a head coach at the pro level.

"Jim has paid his dues as an assistant coach and has his own ideas on the way he wants us to play," Bulls general manager John Paxson said in a statement.

Boylan made it clear Thursday he'll be his own man in an attempt to turn around the Bulls, who at 9-17 are one of the league's most disappointing teams. Their surprising struggles came one season after they took the Detroit Pistons to six games in the Eastern Conference semifinals.

"My approach will be different and I will be myself. I talked to the players about that. I hope any preconceived notions about anyone are put on the back burner."

The Bulls' confidence is wavering, their defense has been soft and their shooting—for a team that depends on perimeter scoring—has been poor.

Paxson said the job is Boylan's for the rest of the season.

AP

## Goolagong No. 1 tennis player—after 30 years



GOOLAGONG

SUNRISE BEACH, AUSTRALIA—Evonne Goolagong figures it was a case of better late than never.

The Australian tennis star was told by the WTA Tour that she should have been top-ranked for a two-week period in 1976. That was a stretch in which she was in the middle of winning six tournaments, including the Australian Open and the season-ending Virginia Slims Championship.

But when some tournament records were transferred to a computer in 1976, all of Goolagong's points were not entered and she never received

the top ranking, the WTA said.

The WTA has amended its records, making Goolagong one of 16 No. 1 players since the introduction of tour computer rankings in 1975.

"Obviously it was the best year that I had ever played," Goolagong said in an interview with The Associated Press on Friday. "I was playing very consistently at a stage where I felt I could beat anyone."

Two weeks ago, the 56-year-old Goolagong received a crystal trophy from the WTA that is now displayed in the living room of her ocean-side home.

"I'm very proud of the achievement,"

Goolagong said. "It's very satisfying, nice to be finally recognized. It's never too late to make it official."

A recent search of the rankings archive in St. Petersburg, Fla., found several paper records were missing between April and July 1976.

Rankings were calculated twice weekly until 1990—they are done weekly now—and it was discovered Goolagong overtook Chris Evert by 0.8 points after the Aussie's victory in the Virginia Slims in Los Angeles in late April 1976. Evert, under the revised calculations, regained the top ranking May 10.

AP

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




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# Listed companies raised record P89.9-B capital in '07

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

PUBLICLY LISTED COMPANIES raised a record P89.9 billion in fresh capital this year, beating last year's record of P57.23 billion, the Philippine Stock Exchange said in a statement.

PSE president Francis Lim said the surge in capital-raising activities was boosted by the robust sentiment toward the stock market this year.

"The bullish sentiment of investors has enticed more companies to sell their shares to the public," Lim said. "The market's vigor and resilience gave these companies added confidence to tap the capital market for funds."

PSE documents showed that 10 companies conducted initial public offerings (IPOs) this year compared with four last year.

Another seven companies conducted follow-on offerings or the sale of additional shares compared with six firms last year. At least nine companies conducted stock rights offerings, while another nine raised capital through private placements.

PSE documents showed that proceeds from IPOs this year reached P18.62 billion, or 21 percent lower than the 2006 level of P19.02 billion. Proceeds from private placements

## Follow-on offerings up 65%

likewise dropped slightly to P5.55 billion from P6.18 billion last year.

Lim said that a dramatic surge in follow-on and stock rights offerings made up for the slack in IPOs and private placements.

Proceeds from follow-on offerings jumped 64.9 percent to P49.03 billion this year from P29.74 billion in 2006.

Equity raised from stock rights offerings grew more than sevenfold to P16.64 bil. on this year from P2.28 billion in 2006.

Aboutix Power Corp. raised the biggest amount from an IPO at P10.09 billion, followed by National Reinsurance Corp. of the Philippines at P2.82 billion.

Other firms that conducted an IPO included Splash Corp. (P1.7 billion), GMA Network Inc. (P1.55 billion) and Orienta Peninsula Resources Group Inc. (P804 million).

Vista Land and Lifescapes Inc. pooled the biggest amount from two follow-on offerings at P14.52 billion, followed by Alliance Global

Group Inc. (Alliance Global) which also held two follow-on offerings to raise P10.35 billion.

Other companies that completed follow-on offerings during the year included Plinvest Land Inc. (P5.92 billion), Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. (P5.67 billion in two follow-on offerings), Philippine National Bank (P5.25 billion), Union Bank of the Philippines (P5.04 billion in two follow-on offerings) and TKC Steel (P2.27 billion).

Megaworld Properties and Holdings Inc. accounted for the biggest proceeds from the stock rights offerings at P10.79 billion. In addition to follow-on offerings, Alliance Global raised P3.31 billion, while Union Bank generated P265.5 million through stock rights offerings. The other firms that raised capital through stock rights offerings included Geograce Resources Philippines Inc. (P560.47 million), EEI Corp. (P540 million) and ISM Communications Corp. (P300 million).

Companies that raised funds from the private placements included Philippine Bank of Communications (P3 billion), Arlas Consolidated Mining and Development Corp. (P871 million), TKC Steel Corp. (P680 million) and ATR Kim Eng Financial Corp. (P104 million).

# Makati Finance to offer 96.7M new, existing shares

PUBLICLY LISTED LENDING FIRM Makati Finance Corp. is offering an additional 96.7 million shares to stock market investors to raise funds to expand its loan portfolio.

In an initial prospectus filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission, MFC said it would offer 75.5 million new shares and 21.21 million shares held by existing shareholders.

The par value of the shares is P1 apiece.

The offer shares will represent 36.7 percent of the outstanding shares of the company after the offer.

The company has yet to finalize the final price, size and timing of

the offering.

Net proceeds from the offer will be used to finance the expansion of the firm's loan portfolio, fund the acquisition of receivables from other finance companies, invest in marketable securities and repay a portion of the company's debts.

Last Dec. 21, the company asked regulators for authority to increase its authorized capital stock to P300 million from P90 million.

Amalgamated Investment Bancorporation (AIB) is being tapped as the issue manager and underwriter for the additional offering of shares.

As of Sept. 30 this year, AIB has a

61.5-percent stake in MFC.

MFC was established in 1996 and is one of the leading consumer finance companies in the country. It has three main products: Rx Cash line of loans to medical profession, MFC Factors, or receivables factoring services, and MC Financing or loans to motorcycle buyers.

MFC decided to position itself as a player in high yielding niche markets to meet the financing needs of the underserved segments of the middle market. In 2002, MFC braved an initial public offering at the stock exchange in its small and medium enterprise SME board.

Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

# Shell cleared from paying P1.7B in taxes

From page B1

The oil firm then used the TCCs to pay for part of its excise tax liabilities, and its payment was approved by the Center and the BIR.

But on April 22, 1998, the BIR sent a collection letter to Shell for the payment of P1.7 billion in alleged excise tax deficiencies inclusive of surcharges and interest for 1992 and 1994-1997. The BIR alleged that Shell was not a qualified transferee of the TCCs.

Shell brought the matter to the Court of Tax Appeals, which ruled in its favor and said the use of the TCCs was valid.

In 1999, the Center informed Shell that the first batch of TCCs that had been transferred to it were canceled. The BIR subsequently sent an assessment letter for excise tax deficiencies to Shell.

Shell again protested the assessment before the CTA, and a division ruled in its favor. But the CTA, sitting en banc or as a whole body, reversed the ruling and directed Shell to pay the BIR P570 million in excise tax deficiencies for the years 1992 and 1994-1997, inclusive of surcharge and interest plus another 20-percent delinquency interest

a year computed from Dec. 4, 1999. Shell elevated the matter to the high court, which reversed the CTA en banc decision and canceled the P1.7 billion BIR assessment issued in April, 1998.

The high court said the TCCs already used by Shell and given by the Center were immediately effective and valid upon issuance, hence the cancellation of the BIR assessment made in 1998.

It junked the CTA's finding that the TCCs would only take effect after being subjected to a post-audit, saying this was "absurd."

"Clearly, a tax payment through a TCC cannot be both effective when made and dependent on a future event for its effectivity. Our system of laws and procedures abhors ambiguity," it said.

"Moreover, if the TCCs are considered to be subject to post-audit as a suspensive condition, the very purpose of the TCC would be defeated as there would be no guarantee that the TCC would be honored by the government as payment for taxes," it added.

It also said the post-audit on the TCCs could only be done with re-

gard to computational discrepancies that may have resulted from their use and transfer, and not on their genuineness and validity.

The high court also said that Shell was a transferee of the TCCs in good faith, and could not be made to suffer for the alleged fraud committed by the company that transferred the credit certificates.

"A transferee in good faith and for value of a TCC who has relied on the Center's representation of the genuineness and validity of the TCC transferred to it may not be legally required to pay again the tax covered by the TCC which has been belatedly declared null and void that is after the TCCs have been fully utilized through settlement of internal revenue tax liabilities," it said.

The TCCs used by Shell were also subjected to stringent reviews by the Center and accepted by the BIR, which was why the oil firm could not be faulted for relying on the Center's approval of the certificates, according to the high court.

It also said that the TCCs could not be canceled anymore because Shell had already used them.

# Agriculture's ...

From page B1

for sustainable fisheries development, aquaculture and marine biotechnology.

Yap said, however, that despite agriculture's relatively impressive showing this year, the DA still has a lot to do in 2008 to sustain the growth momentum.

He said the DA has just started laying the groundwork for an ambitious, 10-year program for the country to attain self-sufficiency in most indigenous crops.

"The Philippines will never become globally competitive in the real sense for so long as we depend on imports for a sizeable chunk of our national food requirements. Agricultural modernization and self-sufficiency have to be the buzz words of the DA," he said.

Yap said the strong comeback of Philippine agriculture did not end in 2007.

"We are hopeful that with the continued support of Malacañang Congress, local governments and all other stakeholders, the sector can grow at an even faster pace in 2008 and onward," he added.

December 28, 2007

Country	Unit	Farm Equipment	Boiler Equipment	Power Equipment
United States	Dollar	0.14467	0.14467	0.14467
Japan	Yen	0.0014467	0.0014467	0.0014467
United Kingdom	Pound	0.14467	0.14467	0.14467
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.14467	0.14467	0.14467
Switzerland	Franc	0.14467	0.14467	0.14467
Canada	Dollar	0.14467	0.14467	0.14467
Singapore	Dollar	0.14467	0.14467	0.14467
Australia	Dollar	0.14467	0.14467	0.14467
Bahrain	Dinar	0.14467	0.14467	0.14467
Saudi Arabia	Riyal	0.14467	0.14467	0.14467
Brunei	Dollar	0.14467	0.14467	0.14467
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.14467	0.14467	0.14467
Thailand	Baht	0.14467	0.14467	0.14467
LAO	Dong	0.14467	0.14467	0.14467
EU	Euro	0.14467	0.14467	0.14467
Korea	Won	0.14467	0.14467	0.14467
China	Yuan	0.14467	0.14467	0.14467
Denmark	Kroner	0.14467	0.14467	0.14467
India	Rupee	0.14467	0.14467	0.14467
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.14467	0.14467	0.14467
New Zealand	Dollar	0.14467	0.14467	0.14467
Sweden	Krona	0.14467	0.14467	0.14467
Taiwan	New Dollar	0.14467	0.14467	0.14467

Source: Quarterly Survey of Farming Activities of 1991-2000, Dec. 27, 2007

\* Figures are in billions of Philippine pesos unless otherwise indicated

# Equities

Company	Price	Change	Volume
ABN Holdings Corp.-PDR	33.00	0.00	100
A. Soriano Corp.	3.00	0.00	100
AJO Holdings Inc.	0.1150	0.0000	100
AFC Group Inc.	0.0000	0.0000	100
ATN Holdings Inc. "A"	2.40	0.00	100
ATN Holdings Inc. "B"	2.40	0.00	100
Asia Pacific Tel. and Mfg. Inc. "A"	0.01	0.00	100
Asia Pacific Tel. and Mfg. Inc. "B"	0.01	0.00	100
Asia Pacific Tel. and Mfg. Inc. "C"	0.01	0.00	100
Asia Pacific Tel. and Mfg. Inc. "D"	0.01	0.00	100
Asia Pacific Tel. and Mfg. Inc. "E"	0.01	0.00	100
Asia Pacific Tel. and Mfg. Inc. "F"	0.01	0.00	100
Asia Pacific Tel. and Mfg. Inc. "G"	0.01	0.00	100
Asia Pacific Tel. and Mfg. Inc. "H"	0.01	0.00	100
Asia Pacific Tel. and Mfg. Inc. "I"	0.01	0.00	100
Asia Pacific Tel. and Mfg. Inc. "J"	0.01	0.00	100
Asia Pacific Tel. and Mfg. Inc. "K"	0.01	0.00	100
Asia Pacific Tel. and Mfg. Inc. "L"	0.01	0.00	100
Asia Pacific Tel. and Mfg. Inc. "M"	0.01	0.00	100
Asia Pacific Tel. and Mfg. Inc. "N"	0.01	0.00	100
Asia Pacific Tel. and Mfg. Inc. "O"	0.01	0.00	100
Asia Pacific Tel. and Mfg. Inc. "P"	0.01	0.00	100
Asia Pacific Tel. and Mfg. Inc. "Q"	0.01	0.00	100
Asia Pacific Tel. and Mfg. Inc. "R"	0.01	0.00	100
Asia Pacific Tel. and Mfg. Inc. "S"	0.01	0.00	100
Asia Pacific Tel. and Mfg. Inc. "T"	0.01	0.00	100
Asia Pacific Tel. and Mfg. Inc. "U"	0.01	0.00	100
Asia Pacific Tel. and Mfg. Inc. "V"	0.01	0.00	100
Asia Pacific Tel. and Mfg. Inc. "W"	0.01	0.00	100
Asia Pacific Tel. and Mfg. Inc. "X"	0.01	0.00	100
Asia Pacific Tel. and Mfg. Inc. "Y"	0.01	0.00	100
Asia Pacific Tel. and Mfg. Inc. "Z"	0.01	0.00	100

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE									
(As of December 28, 2007)									
52 WEEK	52 WEEK	STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	WEEK	WEEK	WEEK
73	44	Bank of the Philippine Islands	80	81	80	80.5	52	52	52
73.5	44	Bank of the Philippine Islands	81	82	80.5	81	52	52	52
74	44	Bank of the Philippine Islands	82	83	81	82	52	52	52
75	44	Bank of the Philippine Islands	83	84	82	83	52	52	52
75.5	44	Bank of the Philippine Islands	84	85	83	84	52	52	52
76	44	Bank of the Philippine Islands	85	86	84	85	52	52	52
76.5	44	Bank of the Philippine Islands	86	87	85	86	52	52	52
77	44	Bank of the Philippine Islands	87	88	86	87	52	52	52
77.5	44	Bank of the Philippine Islands	88	89	87	88	52	52	52
78	44	Bank of the Philippine Islands	89	90	88	89	52	52	52
78.5	44	Bank of the Philippine Islands	90	91	89	90	52	52	52
79	44	Bank of the Philippine Islands	91	92	90	91	52	52	52
79.5	44	Bank of the Philippine Islands	92	93	91	92	52	52	52
80	44	Bank of the Philippine Islands	93	94	92	93	52	52	52
80.5	44	Bank of the Philippine Islands	94	95	93	94	52	52	52
81	44	Bank of the Philippine Islands	95	96	94	95	52	52	52
81.5	44	Bank of the Philippine Islands	96	97	95	96	52	52	52
82	44	Bank of the Philippine Islands	97	98	96	97	52	52	52
82.5	44	Bank of the Philippine Islands	98	99	97	98	52	52	52
83	44	Bank of the Philippine Islands	99	100	98	99	52	52	52
83.5	44	Bank of the Philippine Islands	100	101	99	100	52	52	52
84	44	Bank of the Philippine Islands	101	102	100	101	52	52	52
84.5	44	Bank of the Philippine Islands	102	103	101	102	52	52	52
85	44	Bank of the Philippine Islands	103	104	102	103	52	52	52
85.5	44	Bank of the Philippine Islands	104	105	103	104	52	52	52
86	44	Bank of the Philippine Islands	105	106	104	105	52	52	52
86.5	44	Bank of the Philippine Islands	106	107	105	106	52	52	52
87	44	Bank of the Philippine Islands	107	108	106	107	52	52	52
87.5	44	Bank of the Philippine Islands	108	109	107	108	52	52	52
88	44	Bank of the Philippine Islands	109	110	108	109	52	52	52
88.5	44	Bank of the Philippine Islands	110	111	109	110	52	52	52
89	44	Bank of the Philippine Islands	111	112	110	111	52	52	52
89.5	44	Bank of the Philippine Islands	112	113	111	112	52	52	52
90	44	Bank of the Philippine Islands	113	114	112	113	52	52	52
90.5	44	Bank of the Philippine Islands	114	115	113	114	52	52	52
91	44	Bank of the Philippine Islands	115	116	114	115	52	52	52
91.5	44	Bank of the Philippine Islands	116	117	115	116	52	52	52
92	44	Bank of the Philippine Islands	117	118	116	117	52	52	52
92.5	44	Bank of the Philippine Islands	118	119	117	118	52	52	52
93	44	Bank of the Philippine Islands	119	120	118	119	52	52	52
93.5	44	Bank of the Philippine Islands	120	121	119	120	52	52	52
94	44	Bank of the Philippine Islands	121	122	120	121	52	52	52
94.5	44	Bank of the Philippine Islands	122	123	121	122	52	52	52
95	44	Bank of the Philippine Islands	123	124	122	123	52	52	52
95.5	44	Bank of the Philippine Islands	124	125	123	124	52	52	52
96	44	Bank of the Philippine Islands	125	126	124	125	52	52	52
96.5	44	Bank of the Philippine Islands	126	127	125	126	52	52	52
97	44	Bank of the Philippine Islands	127	128	126	127	52	52	52
97.5	44	Bank of the Philippine Islands	128	129	127	128	52	52	52
98	44	Bank of the Philippine Islands	129	130	128	129	52	52	52
98.5	44	Bank of the Philippine Islands	130	131	129	130	52	52	52
99	44	Bank of the Philippine Islands	131	132	130	131	52	52	52
99.5	44	Bank of the Philippine Islands	132	133	131	132	52	52	52
100	44	Bank of the Philippine Islands	133	134	132	133	52	52	52
100.5									



# Oct. imports up 9.6% to \$5.14B

## Neda official says full-year growth seen to hit 8%

By Michelle V. Remo

THE COUNTRY'S IMPORTS ROSE 9.6 PERCENT to \$5.14 billion in October from a year ago, bringing the 10-month import figure to \$45.22 billion.

The 10-month figure was 5 percent higher than the year-ago level.

With exports hitting only \$41.85 billion, the country posted a trade deficit of \$3.37 billion in the 10-month period.

Electronics imports, which account for the biggest share in the country's imports bill, amounted to \$2.34 billion in October, down 4.8 percent from \$2.45 billion in the same month last year.

Electronics imports are composed mostly of raw materials assembled in the Philippines for export as intermediate goods.

The country's electronics exports are composed mostly of consumer electronics products, including cellular phones, personal computers and laptops.

Myrna Asuncion, director for policy and planning of the National Economic and Development Authority, said the drop in electronics imports in October was likely due to the exporters' high inventory of raw materials for assembly.

In September, electronics imports grew 3.4 percent to \$2.35 billion.

Certain quarters, however, said the decline in electronics imports in October was partly due to the anticipated slowdown in exports.

Exporters, they said, reduced their purchases of raw materials in view of the deceleration in the growth of the US economy, the Philippines' biggest export market.

Mineral fuels, lubricants and related materials accounted for the second biggest share of the country's imports in October, posting an import bill of \$952.26 million. This represents a year-on-year growth of 68.4 percent.

Asuncion said the spike in oil importation was due both on the increase in prices and in volume.

"Fourth quarter is the time when imports rise substantially. Although there is a drop in October, we may see growth of at least 10 percent in the last two months," Asuncion told the INQUIRER.

She said that for the full year, import growth would likely hit 8 percent.

Other top imports for the month were: Transport equipment (\$230.26 million, up 36.2 percent from year-ago level), industrial machinery and equipment (\$185.21 million, down 0.4 percent), cereals and cereal preparations (\$129.94 million, up 151.5 percent), iron and steel (\$99.24 million, up 5.3 percent), chemicals (\$91.51 million), plastics (\$85.88 million), textile yarn, fabrics and related materials (\$83.79 million), and telecommunication equipment and electrical machinery (\$75.86 million).

Japan was the Philippines' biggest source of imports in October, accounting for \$687.57 million or 13.4 percent of the total. With Philippine exports to Japan reaching only \$648.8 million during the month, the Philippines posted a trade deficit of \$38.77 million with Japan.



RELATIVES of overseas Filipino workers patiently fall in line at the foreign exchange counter in SM Megamall to convert their dollars into peso in preparation for their New Year spending. OFWs are expected to pour in about \$15.7 billion next year, a 10-percent increase over the 2007 level.

## Foreign debt stock up to \$54.4B

By Doris C. Dumala

THE PHILIPPINES' FOREIGN DEBT BURDEN, dominated by public sector borrowings, rose to \$54.4 billion as of end-September from \$53 billion in end-June, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reported yesterday.

Compared to a year ago, the external debt stock registered with the central bank also rose by \$366 million from \$54.1 billion due to foreign exchange revaluation and some fresh foreign borrowings.

The year-on-year increase in the debt stock was tempered by additional investments by residents in Philippine offshore debt papers (\$432 million) as well as some downward audit adjustments (\$287 million). When offshore debt papers or IOUs issued by the Philippine government or local corporations are bought by residents, they are excluded from the foreign debt stock computation.

The 2.6-percent increase in the debt stock from the second quarter level to the third quarter this year was traced to the revaluation of third currency-denominated debts which resulted in a \$1.1-billion increase in the amount of obligations in terms of US dollars.

Third currencies refer to currencies other than the Philippine peso and the US dollar.

More than half of the country's debt stock (\$1.7 percent) was denominated in US dollars and about a quarter is in Japanese yen. Multi-currency loans from the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank accounted for 9.4 percent and the rest (13.9 percent) were denominated in 16 other currencies.

Without the revaluation of third currency-denominated accounts, the BSP said the country's foreign debt would have risen by only \$300 million, primarily due to net borrowings by offshore banking units, proceeds of which were re-lent or invested abroad.

"The higher debt stock is not expected to have an immediate impact on the country's external debt payments as most of the affected accounts are Japanese yen-denominated, which have very long repayment terms ranging from 20 to 40 years," the BSP said.

Local borrowers took advantage of the strong inflows of foreign exchange and the sharp peso appreciation to pay some foreign debts ahead of maturity. Foreign debt prepayments during the 12-month period ending September 2007 reached \$2 billion.

The BSP also reported major improvements in the country's external debt ratios due to higher levels of economic output, foreign exchange receipts and international reserves in spite of the increase in external debt stock.

The external debt ratio, or outstanding external debt as a percentage of gross domestic product, improved to 40.4 percent as of end-September, from 41.3 percent in June. The ratio peaked at 72.9 percent in 2001.

For the nine-month period ending September, the country's external debt service ratio, or the percentage of the country's total principal and interest payments to total exports of goods and receipts from services, was estimated at 9.8 percent, lower than the 11.1 percent posted during the same period last year.

## GOINGS-ON

### PSBank bags MAP award

PHILIPPINE SAVINGS BANK, A UNIT OF THE Metrobank Group, was bagged the "Best in Corporate Governance Disclosure" award in the 5th Best Annual Report Awards of the Management Association of the Philippines.

MAP cited PSBank's 2006 annual report in terms of proper disclosure, good governance and compliance with international reporting standards.

The PSBank annual report was chosen among more than 70 entries in a field dominated by the country's universal banks and top 1,000 publicly listed corporations. PSBank was the sole savings bank to qualify among 20 finalists.

True to its annual report theme "simple banking," PSBank communicates to its customers how its products and services meet their financial needs, aided by powerful technology applications.

### Cebuano youth visit EU office

A group of Cebuano youth visited the office of the European Union in Brussels last Dec. 15.

The visit was part of the Young Minds on Xplore (YMX), an immersion program in the Netherlands and Europe from Dec. 9, 2007 to Jan. 4, 2008. The Ramon Aboliz Foundation Inc. (Rafi) and the Dutch government facilitated the immersion through the Parish of St. John Baptist in Hoofddorp, The Netherlands.

The delegation is composed of 33 youth members from different Cebu-based organizations, namely, Young Minds Academy, Commission on Youth Timawa Adventure Leadership Inc., Sugbuanong Fundok Aron Sugbuanang Child Abuse, University of San Carlos Cebu City Mayor's Management Team and Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC). With them were five adult leaders from Rafi.

## SMC completes sale of Aussie dairy, juice firm

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

SAN MIGUEL CORP. YESTERDAY SAID IT had completed the sale of its Australian dairy and juice business to its Japanese brewer partner, Kirin Holdings Co. Ltd., for A\$2.8 billion (roughly US\$2.45 billion).

In a disclosure to the stock exchange, the company said it had reached an agreement with Kirin for the sale of National Foods Ltd. The Japanese firm owns 19.9 percent of San Miguel.

Under the agreement, Kirin will acquire the entire stake of San Miguel in National Foods and make the Australian dairy and juice firm a consolidated subsidiary.

In 2005, San Miguel bought National Foods for A\$1.9 billion.

Since its acquisition, San Miguel has folded into the dairy company Berri Ltd., Australia's leading juice maker, Lactos, a specialty cheese producer, and Kings Creameries, a Malaysian ice cream manufacturer.

Berri was bought in 2004 while Kings Creameries was purchased in 2005. Lactos was bought by National Foods in 2006.

San Miguel's sale of National Foods is in line with the company's divestment of Australian premium brewer J. Boag & Son. It earlier announced it had signed a definitive agreement to sell its premium Tasmanian brewer, J. Boag & Son, to listed Australian alcoholic beverages firm Lion Nathan Ltd. for A\$325 million (roughly US\$284 million). Kirin owns 46 percent of Lion Nathan.

"We are redefining our company and paving the way for San Miguel to enter into high-growth businesses," company official said.



Republic of the Philippines  
SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM

East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City  
Tel. Nos. (812) 920-8401, 532-920-6440

E-mail: member\_relations@sss.gov.ph Website: http://www.sss.gov.ph

### NOTICE

Please get in touch with the Members Assistance Center, Social Security System (SSS), East Avenue, Quezon City or at any SSS office nearest your place of residence and file your death claim within 90 days upon publication, if you are:

NAME OF BENEFICIARY	LAST KNOWN ADDRESS	NAME OF USS MEMBER	DATE OF DEATH
1. Arlene L. Ayson	Lapasan, Cagayan de Oro City	Redolfo T. Ayson SSS-03-0199908-2	August 11, 2007
2. Marilyn Tavares	Villaba, Leyte	Armando P. Barro SSS-03-012355-9	April 18, 2007
3. Ester Wagne	San Isidro, Leyte	Epifanio Boloran SSS-03-012355-9	February 9, 2008
4. Rosita A. Caranigo wife Paulino A. Aunacio-son	Pangasinan, Panga, Cebu	Arnulfo Cananigo SSS-03-0147888-0	May 14, 2007
5. Juliana Gacaran	127 Sta. Cristo, Angeles City	Armando Dulac Gacaran SSS-03-0122556-5	June 18, 2007
6. Gaculan Gonzales Aurora Santiago Gonzales	Unknown	Angel T. Gonzales Jr. SSS-03-0125864-4	June 13, 2007
7. Gemma Naysa-wife and Ludgerda Sabalo wife	Sala Sayes, Zone 16, Cagayan de Oro City	Genastine J. Naysa SSS-03-0540323-7	March 31, 2007
8. Nancy C. Regalado	13 Juna Ave., Malina, Davao City	Oliver S. Regalado SSS-03-028263-0	June 27, 2007
9. Rosita Trinidad Samal	Maguigad Sur, Sar, Roxas, Nueva Ecija	Benigno F. Sumal SSS-03-028927-0	August 2, 2006
10. Anita Tero wife Nila Tero	Cebu	Moises C. Tero SSS-03-0105308-3	May 29, 2007
11. Shirla Suela wife	Tacloban City, Leyte	Joel Valenzuela SSS-03-0157173-2	September 24, 2007

(PDI - Dec. 29, 2007)

- Nothing Follows -

## More efficient market hinged on privatization

By Abigail L. Ho

THE EFFICIENCY OF THE WHOLESALE electricity spot market will be dictated largely by the success of the government's privatization efforts, according to market operator Philippine Electricity Market Corp.

"We need to have a clean exit of the government from the power sector," PEMC president Lasse Holopainen said.

He explained that for competition to prosper in the electricity bourse, no single participant should dominate the market.

And thus could not be done unless the government's privatization efforts succeed, he said.

In an earlier interview, PEMC executive vice president Mario Pangilinan said the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp.'s success in selling power plant assets had helped reduce the possibility of market power abuse at the WESM.

Under the WESM, consumers such as electric cooperatives, distribution utilities such as Manila Electric Co., and other large-scale power buyers have an equal chance to buy power at the best possible price.

Electricity will be traded via the Internet on an hourly basis. Much like trading in the stock market, electricity prices are not fixed. These will fluctuate depending on the supply, demand and even the time of trading.

He said the market expected to welcome three new traders to the WESM—those

who won the bidding for recently auctioned National Power Corp. plants—on the generation side in the coming months.

These are AES Corp. subsidiary Masinloc Power Partners Co. Ltd. for the 600-MW Masinloc coal-fired power plant, Suez-Tractebel for the 600-MW Calaca coal-fired power facility and SN Abotiz Power Hydro Inc. for the 175-MW Ambuklao-Binga hydropower facilities package.

From the start of the commercial run of the WESM in June last year, Pangilinan said the number of participants increased from 10 to 11 generation traders, "with three more participants registering and 1,847 MW of Napocor capacity privatized."

"This reduces the market share of PSALM and Napocor," he added.

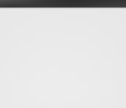
Holopainen said the government's ongoing privatization efforts would do the market, and the industry in general, a lot of good.

"The bottom line is we can't have a mestizo market. It has to be either government or private," he said.

PSALM's three trading teams, down from four at the start of the commercial operations of the WESM, currently control around half of the capacity being traded on the electricity bourse.

PSALM trades capacity generated by Napocor's independent power producers.

Napocor also has its own trading team for the plants that it operates, accounting for some 10 percent of WESM-traded capacity.



REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES  
PHILIPPINE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTER (PICC)

## INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID ONE-YEAR CONTRACT FOR SECURITY SERVICES

The PHILIPPINE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTER (PICC), through its Approved Budget for CY 2008 intends to apply the sum of SIXTEEN MILLION EIGHT HUNDRED NINETY-NINE THOUSAND ONE HUNDRED SIXTY-TWO PESOS AND 86/100 CENTAVOS (P16,899,162.98) being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments for the abovementioned procurement. Bids in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.

The PICC now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders for abovementioned requirement to be procured. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, Instructions to Bidders (ITB).

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR-A) of Republic Act No. 9104, otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act. Only bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the lowest calculated bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine his responsiveness to the technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.

Interested bidders may obtain further information from the BAC Secretariat of the PICC and inspect the bidding documents at the address given below anytime during office hours from January 7 - 22, 2008.

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested bidders from the PICC-BAC Secretariat and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of SIX THOUSAND PESOS (P6,000.00). The method of payment will be in cash. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.

The PICC-BAC will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on January 24, 2008, at 10:00 a.m. at Function Room B, 2nd Floor PICC Secretariat Building, CCP Complex, Pasay City.

Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below at or before 10:00 a.m., February 14, 2008. All bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form of (Cash/Manager's/Cashier's check) in the amount of P 168,891.82 or if surety bond, issued by the GSES or any of the PICC accredited insurance companies, in the amount of P422,479.97 or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. Late Bids shall not be accepted.

Bid opening shall be on February 14, 2008, at 10:00 a.m., at Function Room B, 2nd Floor, PICC Secretariat Building, CCP Complex, Pasay City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend.

The PICC-BAC reserves the right to (a) postpone or re-set the dates of pre-bid conference and/or public bidding and (b) accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE (BAC)  
PHILIPPINE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTER  
CCP Complex, Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City 1307  
(02) 551-8230 or (632) 551-7920 loc 7855 and 7149

(Sglt.) VICTORIA C. BERCELES  
BAC Chairperson

(PDI - December 29, 2007)



# People, Events & Products

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Editor Arles Espinosa

## Get remittances faster with Metrobank

METROPOLITAN BANK & TRUST COMPANY (Metrobank), the country's largest bank in terms of consolidated assets, announces the fastest ways for remitters to send and for beneficiaries to receive their overseas remittances this Yuletide season.

To receive remittances within 24 hours, Metrobank clients are advised to send their money via Metrobank's network of international offices. These are Metrobank branches and subsidiaries located in major cities across the world that offer a wide range of banking services, including remittance services. You may also transact with Metrobank's over 1,000 remittance partners and correspondent banks, for convenience. For fast, convenient, reliable and safe remittance service, use the Metrobank Global Remittance Network.

Clients may also use metrobankdirect, Metrobank's online Internet banking portal. metrobankdirect enables personal account-holders to do banking transactions online, real-time, and features account inquiry, bills payment, funds transfer, telegraphic transfers, loan applications, and more. Enrollment in metrobankdirect is free.

These are just few reminders from Metrobank to allow their clients to experience the benefits and convenience of banking anytime, anywhere. Recently, Metrobank announced that it has opened selected branches to its clients during the holidays.

For more information, visit the Metrobank branch nearest you, or call 898-8000. You may also log on to [www.metrobank.com.ph](http://www.metrobank.com.ph).



### ETON PROPERTIES, NS MANGIO & ASSOCIATES SIGN MOA

Eton Properties recently inked an agreement with architect Nestor Mangio, current president of the United Architects of the Philippines (UAP). Well-known for developing famous lakeside communities, the design team will work on Eton City's 1st phase, the South Lake. Situated in a sprawling close to 1,000-hectare property along the South Luzon Expressway in Laguna, Eton City will provide a complete city lifestyle in a nature-rich setting. Eton City boasts of world-

class developments consisting of residential enclaves, a business district, a golf course and a broad range of commercial and resort-style recreation facilities. For more information, call 845-3866 or log on to [www.eton.com.ph](http://www.eton.com.ph). Shown, from left, are GM for Eton City Alex Jazmines, Basic Holdings executive John Tan, NS Mangio & Associates architect Nestor Mangio, Eton president and COO Danilo Ignacio and architect Brian Mangio.

## Daiso signs exclusive agreement with The DIY Shop

AFTER A SUCCESSFUL SOFT launch of Daiso Lifestyle items last year at selected Japan Home Centre, DIY Shop and Daiso Outlet Stores, Daiso, a division of Japan Home, recently signed a joint exclusive agreement with The DIY (Do-It-Yourself) Shop in October to launch a line of P55 Japanese items to complement its highly successful Japan Home P66 items in all of its 26 stores nationwide.

Daiso 55 will focus on another value price point that's sure to fur-

ther entertain and amuse its shoppers with shocking prices and unique items. The group is planning to launch thousands of new items starting January 2008, which include Made in Japan plastic ware, storage and organizers, stationery, bags, watches, electronic items, gifts and novelty, home display items and much more at only P55.

Daiso 55 Peso items will be avail-



able exclusively at more than 60 stores of Japan Home Centre, Daiso Outlet Store, and The DIY Shop nationwide. Just look for the Daiso

## Goodyear's Bayani ng Kalsada nomination deadline Dec. 31

GOODYEAR PHILIPPINES INC. recently announced its search for this year's unsung heroes on the road is approaching its last stretch. Nominations for Goodyear's Bayani ng Kalsada, the annual nationwide search that aims to promote stories of courage and extraordinary service, will be accepted only until Dec. 31.

"We created this program for those who selflessly risk life and limb to come to the aid of fellow motorists—we believe honor should always be met with honor. These heroes make our roads safer and keep our economy running. With the final deadline fast approaching, we don't want to leave any deserving driver out of consideration," Goodyear president and managing director Dave Morin said.

Now on its second year, the search is open to anyone, including transport associations and car clubs, who wish to nominate a "Tauper Pinoy," representing drivers of public utility vehicles (jeepney, bus, taxi, FX), trucks and private cars. The nationwide program was created by the leading tire manufacturer to locate, honor and publicize those drivers who clearly qualify to be proclaimed "heroes."

Since launching the program in August this year, Goodyear has been receiving various stories of road heroism all over the country. Taxi and jeepney drivers who return their passengers' belongings, bus drivers who risk their lives in

preventing hold-up attempts inside the vehicle, and private motorists who go the extra mile to save the lives of others comprise some of this year's entries.

Encouraged by these random acts of heroism, Goodyear is inviting the public to submit similar exemplary stories. "Too little is known about these motorists whose strong sense of responsibility has contributed largely to making our roads safer and allowing commerce to operate uninterrupted. This is why Goodyear has taken upon itself to look for these unsung heroes and confer upon them the recognition they deserve," Morin said.

Nomination forms are available at Goodyear Servitex dealers and TyrePro outlets nationwide, various Land Transportation Office (LTO) branches, Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board offices, selected Caltex stations, as well as at the offices of Filinvest Franchise and Centro Negosyo.

Entries may be submitted at Goodyear Servitex dealers and TyrePro outlets nationwide. Forms may also be sent via fax at the Goodyear office (876-4596) or at the secretariat (893-7049), or via e-mail at [www.goodyear.com.ph/bayani](mailto:www.goodyear.com.ph/bayani). You may also nominate through SMS-text BNK to register and send to 229.

Each nomination will undergo screening by the contest secretariat, and will be judged by a presti-

gious panel of judges, which includes transportation officials, media and sponsor representatives, and Goodyear representatives.

The contest will have four categories: public utility jeepney drivers, taxi/FX drivers, commercial truck/bus drivers and private drivers. Each winner will receive P30,000 cash prize, P500,000 worth of personal accident insurance, P25,000 worth of gas coupons, P20,000 worth of SM Home Appliance, Food cart with P500 worth of products, P10,000 worth of training certificate, Revicon Forte gift pack, plaque, as well as a Bayani ng Kalsada special jacket, cap and shirt.

Supported by the LTO, Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board, Department of Transportation and Communication, the campaign also includes partners SM Appliance Center, Chevron Philippines, Standard Insurance, Filinvest Franchise Inc, Centro Negosyo Inc, Revicon Forte, DZBB, and LS FM.

The Bayani ng Kalsada is the local version of Goodyear's successful, long-running program in the United States and Canada. Dubbed Highway Heroes, the campaign has been recognizing truck drivers who have done heroic acts of courage, sacrifice and service on the road for the past 23 years.

For more information, log on to [www.goodyear.com.ph/bayani](http://www.goodyear.com.ph/bayani) or call the Bayani ng Kalsada secretariat at 817-7316.

## New Year's Eve bash at The Richmond Hotel

BID 2007 ADIEU IN STYLE AT THE Richmond Hotel with its thrilling New Year's Eve specials to let you celebrate with a bang.

Get ready for a long night of partying at the Richmond's cozy rooms with the New Year's Eve Room Package which starts at P3,800++ for deluxe room accommodations with a hearty buffet brunch for 2 adults and 2 children aged 5 years old and below.

Start off the merrymaking with an exquisite and lavish dinner buffet at the Richmond Grill and delight in a bountiful

spread of savory international favorites for only P1,250net, complete with a choice of bottomless iced tea or glass of sparkling wine and fun party favors.



Then head on to the hotel lobby for a fun and lively countdown party filled with flowing beer, wine, cocktails, juices and sodas, a cocktail buffet, party favors and engaging live entertainment from The Big Bash Band, all for only P600net. Party starts

at 9 p.m. until the wee hours of 2008. Rates are valid only for local residents and expatriates with ACR. For inquiries and reservations, call 638-7777.

## Be safe, make sure to buy original Dragon Fireworks

BEFORE LONG WE WILL BE USHERING IN a new year. When you think of New Year, one thing comes to mind—fireworks. And when you think of fireworks, think of Dragon Fireworks.

Dragon Fireworks has been the Philippines' largest fireworks manufacturer of quality fireworks since 1992. Its loyal customers always patronize its products due to its strict adherence to international quality standards. The constant R&D and foreign consultants also make sure that you get the latest effects available worldwide.

Lately, a deluge of smuggled fireworks coming from China has flooded the market. People think that it is okay to import fireworks to the Philippines only to find out later that these are classified as smuggled and are subject to confiscation by government authorities. The fact that these are being sold to unsuspecting con-

sumers means that they are at risk of being hurt by substandard fireworks products.

Smuggled fireworks are now being packaged confusingly similar to Dragon Fireworks with brochures patterned after past Dragon Fireworks design. Consumers must be more vigilant that they get the real Dragon Fireworks lest they become the victims of these substandard fireworks. While other brands might claim anything to entice people to buy their supposedly cheaper products with the promise of the same quality, it is best to trust genuine Dragon Fireworks so that they may celebrate the New Year with their families safely. Don't be fooled on the first day of the year.

Buy Dragon Fireworks and be sure to get your money's worth and have peace of mind knowing that you are using the best fireworks money can buy.



SHOWN is the contract signing with Mike Enriquez promoting the safe and the original Dragon Fireworks. Shown, from left, are Kyodo Advertis-

ing's marketing manager Bryan H. Sun, Dragon Fireworks' marketing manager Jovenson Ong, RGM's Mike Enriquez and R. Seva.

## The gift for someone who has almost everything

TRY THE JAPANESE-STYLE cakes that come in various Christmas-inspired designs. If the picture looks mouth-watering enough for you to try it, we dare you taste it to prove that

"there's more to it than meets the eye." Its multi-layered filling was made more delicious by the choice of topping that varies from chocolate shavings, fresh fruits, gold dust, pastry puff and a lot more. For more artistically designed cakes, visit Dezaato Pan at Tempura Japanese Grill branches in Tomas Morato, Makati Avenue and Alabang Town Center. Call 374-7460/899-1365/850-2136 for more information. Prices start at P750.



### ASIATRUST BANK HOLDS COUNTERFEIT DETECTION SEMINARS

Asiatrust Bank (ATB) recently hosted a series of counterfeit detection seminars titled "Know Your Money" held at selected branches for the bank's SME clients. The seminars were conducted by authorized officers from the cash department of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas. This has been a

regular activity of the bank in line with its efforts to provide value-added services to its SME clients that would help them in their businesses. Shown at Asiatrust Bank's Camarin branch, where one of the seminars was held, are (from left): ATB north cluster head Robert Imam, valued clients Josefi-

### Asiatrust open Dec. 31

SELECTED ASIATRUST BANK BRANCHES will be open to serve its clients on Dec. 31, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., including Antipolo, Sinondo, Camarin, Roosevelt, Novaliches, Masinag, Ever Commonwealth and Tutuban Center Mall. These branches are also open on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Asiatrust Bank, one of the leading financial institutions serving the Filipino entrepreneurs, has the longest regular banking hours Mondays to Fridays, from 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. For inquiries, call the customer hotline at 924-5777, e-mail [customerhotline@asiatrustbank.com](mailto:customerhotline@asiatrustbank.com), or log on to [www.asiatrusterbank.com](http://www.asiatrusterbank.com).

MORE PEP ON B-6



na Elimanano and Agnes Secillano of La Consolacion College, ATB Camarin BM Lito Aguilar, businessman Vic Molina and speaker BSP Bank Officer I Fermina Madrid. Asiatrust Bank has just celebrated its 47th year of working for the entrepreneur.







# People, Events & Products

## Metrobank reaps award for CSR efforts

METROPOLITAN BANK & TRUST Company (Metrobank), the country's largest bank, was recognized once again for its good corporate citizenship in the Philippines. The Asian Banking & Finance Magazine, one of the leading independent business publishers in Asia, recently held its inaugural Retail Management Awards in Singapore organized by the Chariton Media Group.

Metrobank Foundation, the Bank's corporate social responsibility arm, was recognized as the Best Corporate Social Responsibility Program by the competition's panel of judges, comprised of banking and finance journalists, industry

leaders, and practitioners across the region.

Metrobank Foundation president Aniceto Sobrepeña expressed his appreciation for the honor bestowed on the Foundation, saying that the recognition is a testament to Metrobank's active participation and deep involvement in helping the nation move forward.

"We are pleased to be given the opportunity to put the Philippine corporate social responsibility practices in the global map. This award is a testament to the Metrobank Group's unwavering commitment to helping local communities and our contribution to nation building.

Since we started the Foundation's work in 1979, we have continuously worked with our partners in both public and private sectors in advancing our advocacies in education, arts, public service, and health," he said.

"Metrobank Group chair George SK Ty always reminds us to put more meaning into our achievements by giving back and sharing the fruits of our success with the society that made our success possible in the first place," he explained.

This includes delivering

programs to local communities that complement the values-oriented business culture of the Metrobank Group. Metrobank Foundation takes great effort in going after the public and private schools especially in the countryside for excellent men and women who have proven their service to the community to be bestowed with a Metrobank excellence award.

On top of its excellence awards, the Bank has also espoused good corporate citizenship in various areas like providing grants to deserving charities and scholarships to college students. Aside from being recognized for practicing good corporate governance, the Bank has also supported the government by providing the financing needs of various sectors through specialized lending and proper payment of taxes. In 2007, the Metrobank Group has remitted a total of P24.98 billion in national and municipal taxes, earning a respectable position as one of the nation's large taxpayers.

Sobrepeña added that as a responsible corporate citizen, Metrobank shall remain committed to making meaningful contributions for the economic and social development of local communities, towards the greater goal of nation-building.



INTERNATIONAL celebrity Jackie Chan again teams up with NBA superstar and Olympic bas-

ketballer Yao Ming to promote Visa's Olympic games promo

## Visa gives chance to win trips to the Beijing 2008 Olympics

FROM NOW UNTIL JAN. 15, ANYONE who spends at least P1,000 in a single transaction on their Philippine-issued Visa Debit, Prepaid and Credit card will stand a chance to win a trip for two to the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games. Ten packages for two people each will be given away in Visa's "Beijing 2008 Olympics Visa Promotion" Limited edition Visa Olympic Games memorabilia will also be given out during the promotion.

### Online submission

Cardholders simply need to submit their personal particulars and transaction information online or through SMS to register for the promotion. Those who choose to register online can do so over the newly created Visa Olympics marketing website-www.visasupporters.com-and access the "Philippines" page and click on the "current promotions" link to access the registration page.

"Millions of people around the world are looking forward to what is arguably the world's number one sporting event and we believe that as a worldwide Olympics sponsor since 1986, and through this promotion, Visa is in a special position to make it easier for its cardholders in the Philippines

to stand a chance at experiencing the Olympic Games and to show their support for their athletes in person," Visa International country manager for the Philippines Bob Joubert said.

Limited edition Visa Olympic Games memorabilia and one package to the Games will be given away during every week between Nov. 29, 2007 and Jan. 24, 2008. Two packages to the Games will be given out during the last two weekly draws.

### Passes to 2 events

Each package will be for two people and will consist of round-trip airline tickets, hotel accommodation, hotel transfers and passes to two events at the Games. Winners of the packages will also receive special Visa Olympic Games merchandise.

Winners will be notified via registered mail and through announcements in major daily newspapers. Each cardholder can only win once and if their name is drawn more than once, they will be awarded the package to the Olympic Games.

The Philippines is one of several markets across Asia Pacific to launch this promotion which is part of Visa's regional Olympics marketing campaign.



METROBANK Foundation president Aniceto Sobrepeña (right) represented the Metrobank Group at the awarding ceremony in Singapore, where he received the award from Asian Banking and Finance Magazine editor-in-chief Tim Chariton.

## An Ilocos tour experience



TRAVELING UP NORTH IS NOT just an ordinary field trip or out-of-town escapade, but also an enriching experience.

A good portion of the Philippine wealth is hidden in the Ilocos Region of Northern Luzon. Its main attractions include breathtaking seascapes and landscapes. Its colonial heritage is also a major factor that draws local and foreign tourists to this part of the country.

Vigan is the pride and capital of Ilocos Sur. This historic Hispanic city showcases the finest colonial architecture remaining in the Philippines. Old Spanish houses and antique shops selling memorabilia line the narrow cobblestone streets where horse-drawn calesas still serve as

means of transportation.

The Malacanang of the North, once Marcos' presidential palace and estate, overlooking the legendary Paoy Lake, is said to be the very spot where the "lost towns" of San Juan De Sahagun once stood.

Paoy Church, founded by the Augustinians in 1593, is noted for its architectural style. This famous fortress-like church has massive buttresses, exterior staircase and facade that are "earthquake baroque." It has a separate three-story bell tower, dating from 1793, which was used by local guerrillas in World War II and as a lookout by the Katipuneros during the revolution.

Further up north is Pagudpud where white-sand beaches can be

found. Connecting Ilocos and Cagayan Valley is the Patapat Bridge, the longest bridge in all of Ilocos.

Despite the long hours of travel, a tour in Ilocos is a thrill in itself. The ride gives visitors a view of the region's spectacular coastal scenery, tranquil rivers and lakes, and some 2,000-meter high mountains.

Explore the Ilocos Region and around the Philippines through Engrande Travel. See Palawan, Cebu and Bohol, Davao, Banaue and Sagada, Bicol, Batanes Islands, Camiguin Islands, Busuanga and Coron, and more!

For inquiries and reservations, call 851-1549, 851-0361, 0921-9796165, or e-mail engrandetravel@yahoo.com.ph.

## Living conditions that make diseases thrive

IT'S FAIRLY SAFE TO ASSUME THAT SOME living conditions allow certain diseases to thrive. Viruses, bacteria and other disease-causing illnesses don't just appear out of nowhere. The environment usually makes it conducive for these organisms to thrive and spread, hence causing epidemics.

The figures shown in 2005 Field Health Service Information System of the Department of Health and the previous surveys revealed that respiratory illnesses lead the list of the top 10 illnesses in the country. The statistics suggest that in places where there is large concentration of toxic fumes, there are also high numbers of respiratory illnesses.

A summary of the abovementioned study of the DOH makes a telling conclusion: Metro Manila's environment still does not provide healthy living conditions.

### Most number of Alri

In the findings of the Department of Health, Manila accounts for the most number of Acute Lower Respiratory Tract Infection (Alri) and pneumonia cases countrywide. A breakdown of the figures reveals that 96,010 of the Alri and pneumonia sufferers come from Metro Manila where obviously the daily discharge from vehicles and factories is largely concentrated.

In rural areas where factories and other industrial plants are located, people residing close to them are high-risk groups. A disregard for environmental regulation promotes industrial pollution and gives rise to diseases like bronchitis. For example, chronic bronchitis is found in higher-than-normal rates among coal miners, grain handlers, metal molders, and other people who are continually exposed to dust. High concentrations of sulfur dioxide and other pollutants in the atmosphere also cause bronchitis.

In densely populated areas such as Metro Manila, it is possible, as reported cases reveal, for diseases such as malaria, dengue

and chicken pox to spread. But it all begins of course, with conditions conducive to certain disease-causing bacteria. For example, places with too much stagnant and dirty water make dengue-carrying or malaria-carrying mosquitoes thrive. Once the mosquitoes infect one child, there is a high possibility of other children in these densely populated and congested areas catching the same disease.

Congested areas also make it possible for respiratory tuberculosis to occur. In squatter areas, where the available water is usually unsafe, the occurrence of diarrhea is always reported in the news. Of the 690,566 reported cases of Alri and pneumonia sufferers, 96,010 of there are found in Metro Manila.

### 9 other diseases

Meanwhile, the occurrence of the 9 other diseases is almost always higher than those cases found outside of Metro Manila.

Bronchitis/Bronchiolitis suffers number 84,856; Acute Watery Diarrhea 59,935; Hypertension 28,879; TB Respiratory 21,110; Influenza 16,663; Heart Diseases 3,073; Chicken pox 2,829; Acute Febrile illness 2,795; and Dengue Fever 2,102. Only malaria is not in the list but in its place is the Acute Febrile illness which is relatively a new disease. The symptoms are similar to that of dengue.

If you live under conditions which are conducive to diseases thriving, you may have to take preventive measures by visiting a medical professional regularly. Relocation away from such conditions is drastic and the next best step is to get a vaccine or alert your local health officials to address the situation.

In its effort to make people more conscious of their health, ACE Insurance Philippines is setting up medical assistance booths for a quick check-up from its doctors. They also give out helpful brochures and flyers that provide useful health tips.



## HONDA BREAKS GROUND IN DASMARINAS, CAVITE

Honda recently broke ground on the future site of Honda Cars Cavite (HCCV). Soon to rise along Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo Highway in Salitran, Dasmariñas, Honda Cars Cavite is the 24th full-service Honda dealership in the country. In bringing world-class products and services closer to its customers, Caviteños will soon enjoy more convenient access to its modern facilities with a 6-car display capacity, general repairs, preventive maintenance and body and paint repair services. HCCV, with land area totaling 8,441 sqm, is just 15 minutes away from the Dasmariñas town proper. Groundbreaking ceremony was headed by Honda Cars Philippines Inc president and general manager Hiroshi Shimizu,

HCCV chair of the board Rodolfo Feliciano and HCCV president Clyde Ivan Chua. Feliciano led the symbolic lowering of the 3m capsule that contained a copy of the dealer's layout plan, the day's issue of a national daily and some Philippine coins. Honda Cars Cavite, is set to operate by May 2008. Present during the ceremony were (from left) Siao Ling & Associates representative architect Jo-an Siao Ling, Chua, Feliciano, Shimizu, HCCV sales manager Patrick Chua, Honda Cars Philippines Inc AVP-national service department Danny Pedro, Honda Cars Philippines Inc AVP-market planning and logistics Gabby Peron, and engineer Fernando Vilug II, construction head.

## SpongeBob SquarePants returns to Enchanted Kingdom

SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS WILL MAKE HIS second visit to Enchanted Kingdom! This Nickelodeon character first visited the country's first and only world-class theme park Dec. 2 and guests have been asking to have him back ever since. So, SpongeBob SquarePants will splash his way into the hearts of all guests when he visits at 4 p.m. on Dec. 30 Sunday. Come out and meet SpongeBob SquarePants. You won't need your swimming suit, he'll be at Brooklyn Place near Rialto Theater. Be one of the first 40 guests to have your pictures taken with this under the sea star. Maybe Mom and Dad will want their pictures taken, too. Just purchase

two 200g Magnolia Cheezee bricks worth P50 at the Magnolia Cheezee booth at the Brooklyn Place zone on Dec. 30, present your receipts to the clown Chuckle and he will take you to SpongeBob SquarePants for a photo op. After having those cute photos taken with SpongeBob SquarePants, be a part of his wild and wacky adventure down Bikini Bottom by watching "SpongeBob SquarePants, The Ride!", the newest ridefilm at the Enchanted Kingdom's Rialto Theater in Brooklyn Place. For further inquiries, call 830-2111 to 16 or log on to www.enchantedkingdom.com.ph. Enchanted Kingdom is in San Lorenzo South, Santa Rosa City, Laguna.

## CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS GIFT PACKS

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**ANDREA  
RUETAS JACINTO**

*Peacefully joined our Creator on  
December 26, 2007 at the age of 80.*

Her bereaved children Eusebio Jr., Eugenio, Andrita and Julian, and Eufemio; grandchildren Patricia and Julian Miguel; siblings Sebastiana and Rafael, Javier and Emilia, Juanito and Gloria, Henry, and Lourdes and Serafin, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Forest Hill Funeral Homes, Novaliches, Quezon City.

Interment will be on December 30, 2007 at Holy Cross Memorial Park after the 1:00 p.m. Mass at San Bartolome Parish Church.

**"...absent from the body to be  
present with the Lord."**

**Edgardo Pascual Zialcita**

*In the early morning of December 27, 2007*

*joined his Creator in heaven at the age of 73 after living  
a life full of joy, love, and happiness.*

A former Deputy Governor of Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, Ed is survived by his loving wife Mila; his beloved children and children-in-law Raym & Aboo, Mike & Weng, Raffy & Michelle, Anna Liza, and Brian & Marj, his grandchildren Paolo, Luigi, Javier, Nico, Andie, Anica, and Enzo; his siblings Clarita, Chito, and Nori and sisters-in-law Larina and Josie; and other relatives and friends, all of whom request prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Shrine Parish, New Manila, Quezon City, and will be cremated at Loyola Memorial Chapel & Crematorium, Inc. on December 30, 2007 at 9 a.m. Interment will follow after the 2:00 p.m. Mass at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Shrine Parish, New Manila, Quezon City.

**Norman Dela Paz**

*March 16, 1948 – December 27, 2007  
Peacefully joined his Creator at the age of 59.*

His bereaved wife, **Fely Dela Paz**; children **Jerameel Dela Paz**, **Jezamine Donald**, **Normandy Dela Paz** and **Salvador Dela Paz**, in-laws: **Cielito Dela Paz**, **Craig Donald**, **Regina Dela Paz**, **Marianne Dela Paz**; grandchildren **Rhizameel Dela Paz**, **Aren Zuriel Dela Paz**, **Sylyn Margaret Dela Paz** request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at their residence at 824 San Rafael III, Noveleta, Cavite

Interment will be on January 3, 2008 at 2:00 p.m. at the LOVE Memorial, Noveleta, Cavite after the 1:00 p.m. Mass at the Holy Cross Parish Church.

The Rural Bank of Aritao, N.V. Inc.  
Announces the passing away of one of its Board of Directors

**Bella Sayo Balza M.D.**

**March 1, 1920 – December 27, 2007**

Former Chief Psychiatrist, National Mental Hospital.

(widow of the late **Col. Cenon M. Balza M.D.**  
Surgeon General / Commanding Officer AFP Medical Center)

She is survived by her loving children, **Bey and Lito Antonio**, **Cynthia and Jimmy Gomez**, **Ino and Jenny Balza**, and grandchildren: **Carlsen, Kathy, Joji, Maria Celeste, Marie, David and Cimon.**

Her remains lie in state at Premiere I Chapel Loyola Memorial Chapel, Guadalupe, Makati City. Masses will be held daily at 8:00 p.m.

There will be a funeral mass on Sunday at 10:00 a.m. followed by a celebration of life and interment will be at 2:00 p.m. at Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City

**ELIZABETH CHUASECO COBANANAT**

was called home to the Lord at the age of 56 on December 27, 2007

*"Forgetting what is behind & straining toward what is ahead.  
I press on toward the goal to win the prize  
for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."  
Philippians 3:13-14*

Her husband Gregorio; children **Grethel**, **Gertrude** and **Joey**, **Gwendolyn** and **Michael**; her grandchildren **Marcus**, **Gillian**, **Georgianna** **Gavin** and **Jaci** are deeply grateful to everyone who has given their love and support during her lifetime.

Her remains lie at the Funeraria Paz, Manila Memorial Park Sucat until December 30, 2007. Interment will be at Manila Park Dasmariñas on December 31, 2007.

**NELSON ABEL DY LOA**

*February 18, 1941 – December 23, 2007  
Peacefully joined our Creator at the age of 66.*

His loving wife **LYDIA**, children **BENEDICT & SHIRLEY**, **MARLOU & JOHN**, **WILBERT & MARILYN**, **NELSON JR. & JEZIBEL**; grandchildren **ANDREA LORRAINE**, **ADRIENNE LAURICE**, **ALEAH LOUISE**, **MARVIN JOSEPH**, **MICHELLE JOYCE**, **BEATRICE ANN**, **DANIELLE ANN**, **GABRIELLE ANN**, **ZACHARY**, **JEZICA JENELLE**, brothers, sisters, nephews and nieces together with his relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Arlington Memorial Chapels, Inc. #12 G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Cremation will be on Sunday, December 30, 2007 at 1:00 p.m. at the Chinese Crematory Manila

**EMILIA REYES PERALTA**

(January 18, 1950 – December 26, 2007)

*Peacefully and with full faith surrendered to God's loving  
will is now with her husband, **FRANKLIN M. PERALTA**,  
and her parents, **ARTURO** and **CONSUELO REYES***

She will be sorely missed by her daughters, **Ma. Catalina** (Kathleen), **Ma. Aurora** (Aole), and **Ma. Carmencita** (Menchu), her brothers and sisters-in-law, **Tony** and **Rosario**, and children, **Maricor**, **Cristy**, **Mila**, and **Jerome**; **Jun** (Nene) and **Cora**, their son, **Gerard**, and **Raffy** and **Tessa**, and children, **AJ**, **Audrey** and **Michelle**, her mother-in-law, **Catalina M. Peralta**, brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law, **Dado** and **Audrey**, their children, **Dottie**, **JC**, **Tommy** and **JJ**, **Vissia** and **Kune**, their sons, **JP** and **Miko**, and **Bong** and **Joyce**, grandnephews and nieces, and other relatives and friends.

Her remains lie in state at Funeraria Paz, Superior de Luxe, Araneta Ave., Quezon City.

Interment will be on the 2nd of January 2008 after the 8:00 a.m. Mass at Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City.

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# BUSINESS

## Inflation rise seen to slow down in '08

BSP says risks to come from oil, food supply disruptions

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By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS sees the country's year-on-year inflation rising by 3.2 to 3.7 percent in December due to holiday consumer spending as well as food supply disruptions caused by the recent typhoons.

In November, annual inflation surged to 3.2 percent from 2.7 percent in October due to higher food and utility prices. The 11-month inflation average so far stood at 2.7 percent.

Inflation reflects the average increase in the prices of basic goods consumed by a typical household.

"Factors affecting inflation include price increases in fruits and vegetables due to the recent typhoons," BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said.

He also cited pressures from con-

sumers as they prepare for the holidays.

"Price increases in milk, flour and domestic petroleum in response to global conditions have also contributed to the expected slight uptick," the BSP chief added.

But the BSP still believes the inflation environment will remain benign over the next 18 to 21 months. In the last three months, the BSP slashed its overnight rates by 75 basis points.

"Risks, including those coming from global price movements of commodity and food prices, are expected to be manageable," Tetangco said.

The BSP sees a slowdown in the country's inflation over the next two years, despite continuing risks from rising oil and commodity prices. The central bank has set an inflation target of 3.5 percent for 2009, lower by half a percentage

point than the 4-percent rate set for next year.

Inflation in 2009 is expected to range from 2.5 to 4.5 percent. For 2008, the rate may range from 3 to 5 percent.

Under the central bank's monetary management, any decision to hike or cut short-term interest rates or adjust bank reserves is based on the actual inflation path and not just on growth of liquidity in the financial system.

Tetangco said the downward path of inflation should continue, partly aided by the peso's sharp appreciation against the US dollar.

A strong local currency means lower costs of imported goods, especially for the Philippines which is a net oil importer.

Also, an appreciating peso exerts downward pressure on local interest rates, further lowering the cost of doing business in the country.

## New year, new management for telco giant

By Riza T. Olchondra

THE PHILIPPINE LONG DISTANCE TELEPHONE COMPANY (PLDT) will overhaul its management on Jan. 1—a transformation that started way back in 1998.

The changes, which took ten years in the making, will merge the retail and consumer businesses of PLDT.

But PLDT stopped short of complete convergence when it decided to keep the fixed line group separate from its wireless arm Smart Communications Inc.

"Our view is that it is better to keep certain operational areas independent of each other—at least for the moment," PLDT chairman Manuel Pangilinan said in a statement. "For example, we've chosen to keep the retail and consumer businesses of our fixed and wireless disaggregated."

According to spokesperson Ramon Isberto, PLDT and Smart will "remain separate companies, with distinct markets."

"Of course, it does not mean there will be no further moves toward convergence as the market and technologies change," he added.

PLDT earlier announced that PLDT's Human Resources Group head Victorico P. Vargas will lead a newly created business transformation office.

The transformation office will oversee the overall management initiatives at PLDT, including the ongoing conversion of its fixed line unit into a next-generation network.

The proposed changes include the reduced role of PLDT president and chief executive Napoleon Nazareno in Smart.

Nazareno, while remaining president and chief executive of Smart Communications Inc., will devote more time on the fixed line business.

"These organizational changes were agreed upon after extensive discussions within the senior management and signal our collective determination to renew the process of transformation that was started in 1998," Nazareno said.

## BIR turns to PLDT, Meralco to hunt down tax evaders

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BUREAU OF INTERNAL REVENUE said it would ask the help of Manila Electric Co. and Philippine Long Distance Co. in catching tax evaders among their customers.

The BIR said in a statement that the move was in line with its anti-tax evasion program, which was being intensified to shore up tax collection.

Meralco and PLDT are expected to be a big help to the BIR's anti-tax evasion program because of their extensive client database.

The BIR has been using information provided by third parties, such as other government agencies, to detect tax delinquency.

"The BIR reiterates its warning to recalcitrant taxpayers that it could now easily detect discrepancies on taxes paid," the BIR said.

Internal Revenue Commissioner Lillian Hefti said the BIR had also adopted the program called "Tax Reconciliation System-Letter Notices" (TRS-LNs), which is a computerized matching system to detect tax deficiencies.

Under the system, the BIR compares the income declared by a corporate taxpayer with the purchases made by its clients.

Reports by other third parties, besides clients, are also used to verify the accuracy of income declared by taxpayers.

The BIR also said local government down to the barangay level would also be asked to help in the collection of national taxes by providing needed taxpayers information.

The BIR's tighter audit was spurred by its huge tax-collection shortfall.

The BIR only collected P647.7 billion worth of taxes as of November, short of its 11-month target by P53.3 billion.

Finance officials said it was no longer possible for the BIR to meet its tax collection target this year of P765.9 billion, but said measures enhancing the BIR's efficiency were expected to bear fruit next year.

The BIR's failure to meet its 11-month goal prompted the government to intensify its privatization program.

Proceeds from the sale of state-owned assets helped the government post a P12.6-billion budget surplus in the first 11 months.

## THE BLOOD IS BACK

The long wait is over as the hottest local anthology returns. "Youngblood" is in the house, loaded with the best essays from 1999 to 2007 in the most concentrated Youngblood package yet. Bear witness as a generation continues its evolution. This is the Filipino youth in their most honest and most eloquent. Here are the essays that matter from the newspaper that started it all. "Youngblood" is the Young Filipino—unplugged.

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## PROPERTY

## PROPERTY FORECAST

What to expect  
in 2008

By Tessa R. Salazar

(Conclusion)

**D**ESPITE THE BOOM IN property developments in 2007, there have been obstacles, or what "alarming signs," that would tend to weigh down the property sector:

- The boom is actually limited to new developments and condominiums.

- Several potential buyers are still wary of problems associated with fraudulent titles.

- High transaction costs and the lack of information also hamper the real estate market. Prince Christian Cruz, senior economist of [www.globalpropertyguide.com](http://www.globalpropertyguide.com), added that condominiums and new subdivisions are generally free of these concerns; hence, they benefit more from the boom.

## Emerging markets

Richard Raymundo, director for Research & Consultancy, Colliers International, predicts what 2008 holds for the office, high-rise residential and hotel and leisure sectors.

The office sector will still be the banner sector for 2008. Rents will continue to post strong growth as they ride

on the back of a strong demand from the BPO segment, with suppliers scurrying to keep up. In 2007, rents went up by as much as 26 percent. Rents in the best buildings in the Makati CBD have breached the P1,000-per-square-meter-per-month mark. This increase comes on top of a 30 percent rent hike in 2006.

Rents could increase by as much as 15 percent in 2008. Strong demand will still come from the BPO (which include call centers) segment. Industry analysts predict that the BPO segment would need 1.85 million sq m of office space from 2008 to 2010.

However, the announced supply has only been 1.58 million. This is broken down to 634,000 sq m under construction and 945,000 sq m on the drawing boards. "If the planned developments do not push through, the supply would remain tight," Raymundo assesses.

Vacancy in all districts is at single digit levels, while there is not much new supply to be added in 2008.

- **Makati CBD.** End 2007 vacancy is at 3 percent. Only 60,000 sq m of space will be complete in 2008. Office vacancy will remain below 5 percent throughout 2008.

- **Ortigas Center.** End 2007 vacancy is at 4 percent. Only 20,000 sq m of office space is being constructed for completion in 2008. As with Makati CBD vacancy rates, Ortigas CBD vacancies

will remain below 5 percent throughout 2008.

- **Port Bonifacio.** "The fastest growing area in the country right now has also been benefiting from the office 'spillovers' of Makati CBD. End 2007 vacancy here stands at 10 percent. Space for completion in 2008 is estimated at 200,000 sq m. While this may seem a lot, a number of projects are already getting precommitments for leasing space.

High-rise residential condominiums posted strong sales 2007. High-rise residential living is now broader, targeting middle-income (starting prices of P1.25 million per unit) to the high-end (in excess of P15 million per unit) segment. Some trends in this sector are:

- **Accessibility** is a key factor, particularly for middle-income segment.

Thus, expect more of these kinds of development along the Edsa corridor.

- **Heavily themed projects** are in, given the increased competitiveness. "There are new developers in the market who are even getting good presales take-ups," Raymundo observes. The year 2007 witnessed new concepts such as Z-lofts, themed cluster developments, interesting pocket gardens and sole amenity floors. Expect to see more of these coming out in 2008.

- **Level of facilities and amenities** would be taken a notch higher to differentiate projects. This will be seen in the high-end segment wherein the level of facility and amenity will justify the price premiums.

- **Price premiums** would be based on proximity to retail centers, schools, business districts and transportation hubs.

- **High-end developers** will test the P110,000 per sq m price level. This is marketable for projects launched in prime locations, and having excellent amenities.

- **Expect the emergence of cluster residential condominiums** executed as an enclave. This would highlight the sense of exclusivity and privacy—a luxury in congested urban centers—to select buyers.

- **Based on selling prices** that increased 10 percent in 2007, expect an additional 10 percent increase in 2008. Some locations, though, may find it harder to impose price increases due to relatively larger supplies. An example of this would be Fort Bonifacio. Currently, nearly 7,000 units are being sold and constructed here from 2008 to 2011.

## Trends

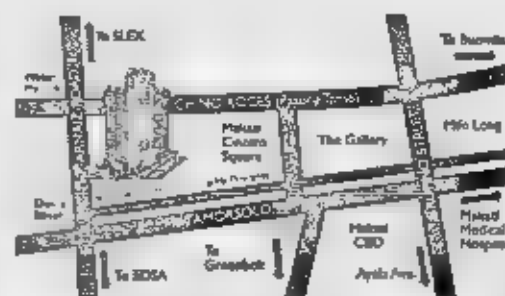
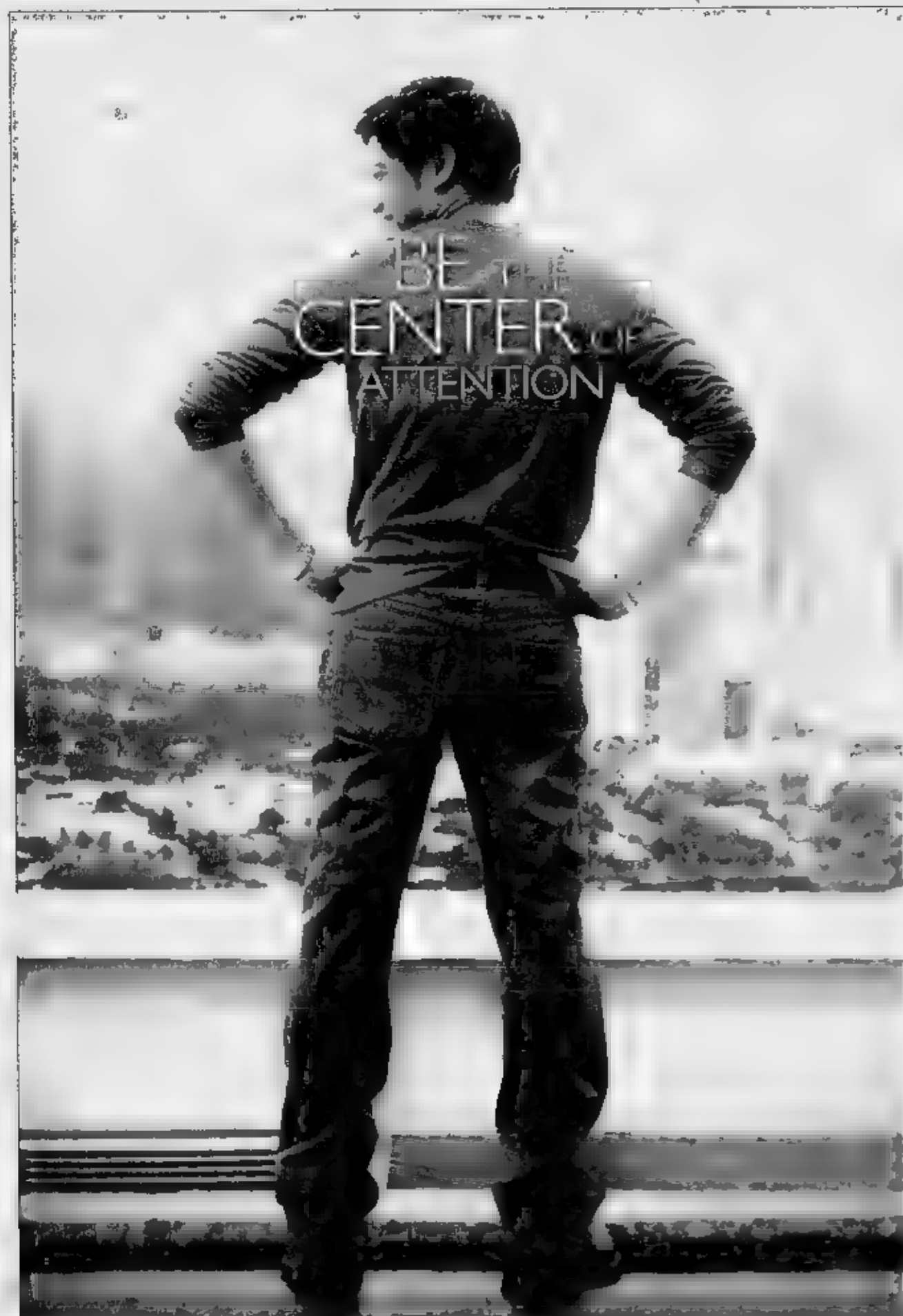
Hotels and leisure developments will figure more prominently in 2008. Some trends:

- **Leisure is catering to a broader market.** So leisure lots are now being offered in smaller cuts and more affordable total contract prices such as Playa Calatagan. There are now also condominium projects that make it more affordable and easier to maintain. Examples of these are Hamilo Coast, Terrazas de Punta Fuego and Alti Vista in Boracay.

- **More leisure concepts** are being launched. Boutique hotels will be more prominent. These are hotel developments with less than 30 rooms but are high on style and amenities.

- **The announcement of more hotels** (Raffles and Fairmont in Ayala Center) in the Makati CBD will be a welcome relief. The year 2007 saw frustrated travelers finding it hard to book hotel rooms in the Makati CBD. The high occupancy rates in the Makati CBD and increasing tariff rates (the \$150-\$200 effective rate is now being achieved) have led to spillover demand to other locations such as the Bay Area in Manila.

WHAT? B2-2



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## PROPERTY

## How to avoid bad luck all year round

By Tess S. Samanlego

**S**AYING GOODBYE AND WELCOMING the new year are always done with a big bang in traditional Filipino homes, blending both religious and feng shui beliefs to bring luck for the rest of the year.

Robyn Bendey, holistic living practitioner, author and media personality dedicated to the study of vibrational arts and sciences, offers a few and simple-to-follow tips on how to brush off the bad luck of the past and usher in a more prosperous new year.

Although feng shui follows the Chinese new year, which falls on Feb. 7, 2008, it wouldn't hurt to follow some of these helpful hints for the traditional Filipino new year celebration every Jan. 1.

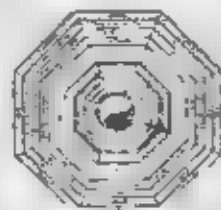
## Before New Year's Eve

Before New Year's Eve, you should:

- Clean the entire house to get rid of any ill-fortune associated with the past year and make room for incoming good luck.
- Put away all brooms and brushes.
- Pay all your debts.
- Resolve differences with relatives, family members, friends, business associates.
- Prepare meals for New Year's Eve and New Year's Day.
- Decorate your house with plastic

firecrackers to frighten away evil spirits and the bad luck they might bring.

- Decorate your home with live blooming plants to symbolize rebirth and new growth.



## On New Year's Eve

On the eve of the New Year, you should:

- Get together with family for a meal and family activities.
- Pay respects to your ancestors.
- Set off firecrackers at midnight to

send out the old year and welcome the New Year.

- Open every door and window at midnight to let go of the old year.

## On New Year's Day

On New Year's Day, you should:

- Be careful with your words, deeds, what you eat and whom you greet because the events that occur on New Year's Day may have an impact on the rest of the year.
- Don't wash your hair or you will wash away any good luck for the New Year.
- Wear brand new clothes.
- Wear the color red for joy and happiness.
- Don't wear white or black as they are colors of mourning.

• Greet your relatives, neighbors, and friends and wish them well.

- Don't greet people in mourning.
- Give red envelopes with lucky money to children and unmarried people.
- Don't sweep the floor or clean or you may sweep away your luck.
- Don't say the number "four" (which sounds like the Chinese word for death).
- Don't mention death or tell ghost stories.
- Don't cook.
- Don't use knives or scissors or you may cut off fortune.
- Don't lend money or you will be lending all year.
- Don't borrow money.

(Source: <http://www.fengshuidiva.com>)

## Be at the center of it all at Eton Emerald Lofts

METROPOLITAN MANILA HAS EXPERIENCED tremendous development in the last few years, and this can be seen in the rise of new growth areas. Beyond Makati, traditionally regarded as the metro's main business district, Ortigas Center provides a viable alternative to those who want to be in the midst of a booming community.

Ortigas Center has been steadily becoming a choice business location, due to its accessibility via various modes of transportation. Likewise, it has become a mecca for those who seek leisurely comforts, with malls like Shangri-La Mall, The Podium, Galleria and Megamall serving as lifestyle destinations. Indeed, Ortigas Center offers a multitude of shopping, dining and entertainment options in its sprawling space.

With its fast growth, it's no wonder that many would wish to be part of this vibrant community. And at Eton Emerald Lofts, one can have an invigorating lifestyle brought by being at the center of it all.

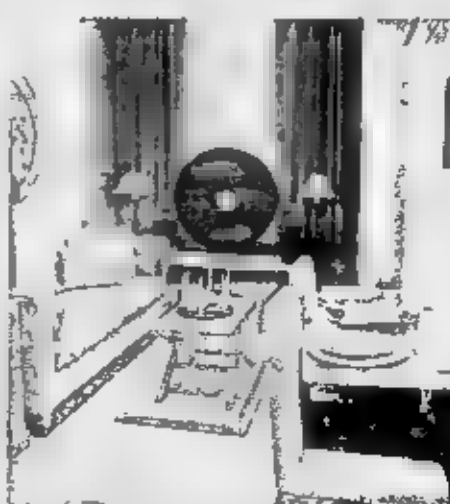
## Landmark development

Eton Emerald Lofts is a landmark development of Eton Properties Philippines Inc., the real estate arm of the Lucio Tan Group of Companies. A twin-tower condominium at the heart of Ortigas Center, Eton Emerald Lofts aims to provide the best of loft living as well the excitement of the urban lifestyle.

Lofts have gained a following among those who want a fashionable residence, and at Eton Emerald Lofts, they can truly have that stylish haven. An all-loft residential building, Eton Emerald Lofts offers units that are generously spaced and have high ceilings, providing a myriad of design possibilities. The spaciousness of the units also means infinite ideas for use; it could serve as a home, a studio or just a



ETON Emerald Lofts offers units that are generously spaced and have high ceilings, providing a myriad of design possibilities.



A TWIN-TOWER condominium at the heart of Ortigas Center, Eton Emerald Lofts aims to provide the best of loft living as well the excitement of the urban lifestyle.

gathering place

## Relaxation, leisure options

Beyond one's unit, residents can enjoy a wealth of relaxation and leisure options. Facilities include a gym, swimming pool and children's play area. A podium is devoted to retail establishments like beauty salons, casual dining restaurants, coffee shops, convenience store and even a spa.

And of course, residents are minutes away from where the action is as top shopping malls and dining and entertainment strips are very accessible from Eton Emerald Lofts.

Truly, Eton Emerald Lofts provides a living experience like no other, at the center of it all.

To know more about Eton Emerald Lofts, visit [www.eton.com.ph](http://www.eton.com.ph) or call 845-3866. Model units are now available for viewing just across the project site on Emerald Avenue, Ortigas.



MEGAWORLD recently launched its first all-loft project at Eastwood City, the Eastwood LeGrand.

## Megaworld launches first all-loft project at Eastwood City

MEGAWORLD CORP., THE country's top residential and business process outsourcing (BPO) condominiums developer, recently launched its first all-loft project at Eastwood City—the Eastwood LeGrand Tower 2.

"We are proud to launch Eastwood LeGrand Tower 2 as the first all-loft residential building at Eastwood City. Its loft units will definitely provide luxurious living accommodations and expansive views of the city through its double-height floor-to-ceiling windows," noted Eastwood Property Holdings Inc. FVP for Marketing John Natividad.

## New tower

Like its predecessor, the highly successful Eastwood LeGrand Tower 1, this new tower was inspired by the Art Deco movement in the United States in the 1920s. Glass, metal and concrete in geometric patterns combine to create a golden yellow facade for the tower, while a striking stepped motif crowns the building's apex. It is located right within the new Palm District. This new district features an additional entry and exit point for this burgeoning satellite city.

Its Eastwood Palm Tree Avenue connects to C5 road.

The tower's exclusive amenities include a 12-meter lap pool with sunbathing deck, a landscaped garden and a children's playground at the seventh level. Meanwhile, the ground floor hosts leading brands for more luxurious shopping choices.

## Luxurious living spaces

This new project builds on Eastwood City's proven Live-Work-Play formula. Its loft units provide luxurious living spaces for its residents. The Eastwood City Cyberpark and its top BPO locators provide top-notch executive opportunities. The Eastwood CityWalk, meanwhile, provides an array of exciting dining, shopping and entertainment choices for the whole family.

Loft units at Eastwood LeGrand Tower 2 will be available from studio to two-bedroom affairs. Units may also be combined for even grander living spaces.

Investors and aspiring homeowners may know more about Eastwood LeGrand by calling 421-4243 or 47 or by visiting the showroom at Eastwood City's posh Orchard Road. Or check out [www.megaworldcorp.com](http://www.megaworldcorp.com).

## Furniture industry group ups the ante for Manila Now

IT IS TRUE THAT IN THIS DOG-EAT-DOG world, only the brave and tough survive. And those who are fearless and dare to march into uncharted territories succeed. However, one also has to keep upping the ante if he wants to get ahead. This principle applies in business, as well. And this is the same philosophy that the Chamber of Furniture Industry in the Philippines (CFIP) adheres to.

Each year, the dynamic organization brings world attention to our shores by creating a buzz in the local furniture sector via the Philippine International Furniture Show—Manila Now, which it organizes.

It has always placed high importance on design and innovation, even inviting design masters such as Karim Rashid and Gaetano Pesce to collaborate with local manufacturers and designers to ensure the constant delivery of new products to the world market. "We believe in keeping our buyers excited by always offering something new," says Eduardo Zuluaga, chair of Manila Now 2008.

And to keep them excited, Zuluaga introduces major changes to the 2008th edition of the Manila Now show.

## Show dates

Among them are the show dates, which have been moved to March 5 to 8 (from its previous schedule of Feb. 27 to March 2).

"This makes it more convenient for buyers, because it is within the Asean furniture trade show circuit. When they come to Southeast Asia, all the Asean furniture shows happen one after the other. You can effectively see six different furniture shows in six different countries in less than two weeks," he explains.

The new schedule is right after the Malaysia International Furniture Fair on March 4 to 8, and before the International Furniture Fair Singapore/Asean Furniture Show 2008 (IFFS/AFS 2008) on March 9 to 12.

Zuluaga believes that the new schedule is convenient for the buyers and will attract them to the region. "Six different shows, six distinct interesting choices. Filipino manufacturers are confident of their products. All they need is a bigger audience (more buyers). Thus, of course, translates to bigger sales for our participants, and bigger exports for the Philippines," Zuluaga says.

## Venue

Another major change is the venue. "We will now have the show at the newly built SMX Convention Center, which is the country's newest and biggest exhibition and convention center." Launched in November, SMX boasts 17,000 square meters of exhibition space, "and that doesn't count the smaller function rooms, which companies

can avail themselves of and turn into private showrooms," Zuluaga adds.

Despite the bigger space, participation rates are more reasonable than in previous years, which are why spaces at the ground floor have already been sold out, and half of the third level are already filled up not just with furniture, lighting companies, houseware and accessories are all coming in.

## Positive feedback

Clearly, all these changes are creating a positive feedback for the show. "We also received a lot of early registration from buyers since we announced the new dates and venue," Zuluaga boasts. Despite this, CFIP is still carrying out an aggressive marketing campaign to promote Manila Now.

"We partnered with Global-Link Business Communications Phil. Inc. not just to take care of this aspect but also to professionally manage the show," Zuluaga says, adding that Global-Link's international campaign is expected to increase buyer attendance by 20 percent.

For more information on participation, call Global-Link Business Communications at 750-8588, fax at 750-8585 or e-mail [info@globalinkph.com](mailto:info@globalinkph.com). Past exhibitors may avail themselves of a "Special Participation Package," which comes with free ad in the show directory as well as a complimentary design consultancy.

## What to expect in 2008

From page B2-1

• Fort Bonifacio will likewise host more hotels to augment the tight supply in the Makati CBD. Shangri-La is the most prominent, having acquired a 1.5-hectare property in the former military base.

## Emerging markets

Santos said investment in the Asian real estate industry has historically been concentrated in mature markets such as Tokyo, Singapore, Hong Kong, and fast-growing cities in China.

The downward pressure on returns in these mature markets and excess liquidity in capital markets is encouraging investors to look seriously at emerging markets in Southeast Asia, resulting in a steady advance in investments there.

"The Philippines, in particular, is slowly growing in terms of investment as a result of the huge demand for offshore services," Santos said. "And that growth is accelerating," Rick Santos, CB Richard Ellis Philippines chair, said in a statement.

Santos added that another factor influencing the Philippine real estate sector is an increase in the number of initial public offerings (IPO) by real estate developers. From 2004 to 2007, 21 firms went public, seven in 2007. Also in 2007, three other real estate companies—Anchor Land Holdings, Vista Land and Lifescapes and Eton Properties Philippines—announced plans for IPOs. Funds generated by the IPOs are expected to be invested in new projects.

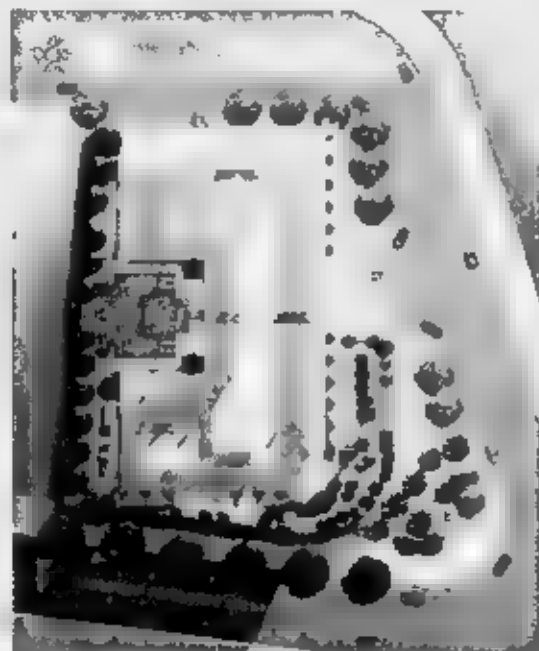
"As a result of these recent develop-

ments, global insurance conglomerate ING has placed the Philippines in the top three investment sites among emerging markets in 2007," Santos said.

"Foreign property investment in the residential market has experienced robust growth, partly as the result of an influx of Korean investors into the country. Korea's Hanjin Heavy Industries and Construction Corp. invested \$13.7 million for a high-rise residential development in Fort Bonifacio," Santos said.

"Increasingly, we see a variety of Philippine projects being sold in key overseas markets including California, the US East Coast, Dubai and Hong Kong," Santos said, "which will also contribute meaningfully to growth in Philippine real estate."

EASTWOOD LeGrand Tower 2 is located at Eastwood City's new Palm District, which boasts of a direct connection to C5 road.





# Japanese minimalist design

THE JAPANESE ARE ONE OF THE MOST energy-efficient people on the planet. This is not surprising given the fact that much of contemporary Japanese design is minimalist. What is the relevance of energy efficiency with Japanese minimalist design?

## Minimalist design

Minimalist design in architecture means retaining only the most essential elements of a building without compromising the building's function and aesthetics.

Even if Japan has a very different climate from the Philippines, many of the green design practices associated with Japanese minimalist design are applicable here.

## Simple design

Minimalist buildings are not ostentatious. This assumes that they still meet the occupants' needs, but there is a clear effort to do away with unnecessary details that may only clutter the visual appearance of the building. For example, excessive moldings, false facades and decorations are all a waste of materials, labor and energy. Perhaps doing away with these may improve the appearance of an otherwise ordinary building. After all, less is more.

Minimalist buildings are also friendlier to the occupants because they are perceived to be spacious. This follows the concept of the traditional Japanese house where sliding panels open up to merge smaller rooms with larger ones, thus giving one a feeling of openness and tranquility.

This type of building design espouses a simple layout of rooms making it easy for occupants to navigate within the building.

This simplicity extends to the building envelope or exterior design where details are pared down and reduced to the barest minimum.

The minimalist building is marked by the military precision and regularity of modular components from the base to the top of the structure. This means building components that are aligned creating symmetry and rhythm that is both orderly and pleasing. Examples would be floor linear patterns that match wall panels extending all the way up to the ceiling.

Minimalist buildings encourage the adoption of single-loaded corridors, thus creating bright and airy interiors. Windows along corridors also remove the dark, claustrophobic feeling so common in many hallways.

## Indoors and outdoors

The minimalist building also blurs the boundaries between the indoors and the outdoors, perhaps through glass doors or

## GREEN ARCHITRENDS



Amado de Jesus

**MINIMALIST design in architecture** means retaining only the most essential elements of a building without compromising the building's function and aesthetics. Shown is the International Center for Environmental Technology Transfer (Icett) Building in Yokkaichi, Japan.

by having large openings throughout the building. By merging the outdoors with the indoors, occupants feel closer to nature.

An inner courtyard allows a lot of natural light into adjacent parts of the building, along with the benefits of natural ventilation, thus further enhancing the occupants' closeness to nature.

## Design for easy maintenance

A minimalist design allows for easy maintenance due to the simplicity in its construction details. Both exterior and interior elements are designed for minimal maintenance using material finishes that are either long-lasting or self-cleaning. In particular, exterior walls are seldom dependent on the ubiquitous paint for its good looks.

Areas that are usually hard to clean in many buildings are the nooks and crannies, like for example, where the toilet floor and the walls meet. This is where dirt normally builds up. Minimalist buildings have rounded corners to prevent accumulation of dirt and grime buildup. In some cases, fixtures like lavatories and bath tubs are built-in, thus minimizing construction joints that may attract mildew and bacteria buildup.

Since there are no awkward corners to deal with, maintenance is easier and less cumbersome even with cleaning equip-



A MINIMALIST building, like this Icett Building in Yokkaichi, Japan, features an inner courtyard which allows a lot of natural light into adjacent parts of the building, along with the benefits of natural ventilation, thus further enhancing the occupants' closeness to nature.

A. P. DE JESUS JR. & ASSOCIATES—GREEN ARCHITECTURE



A. P. DE JESUS JR. & ASSOCIATES—GREEN ARCHITECTURE

ment such as floor polishers and vacuum cleaners.

Areas that are subject to constant wear and tear are finished with easy-to-clean materials like stainless steel and glass, materials that not only require little maintenance but are also features that add elegance to a building, whether used for stair handrails or picture windows.

## Relevance to energy efficiency

Japanese minimalist design is the product of their country's culture of conservation. The concept of reducing design elements to a minimum is an offshoot of this mentality. Thus it is only natural for them to adopt this attitude with regard to their natural environment and inevitably to energy efficiency and conservation.

The modesty or simplicity that greets viewers when confronted by a contemporary Japanese minimalist building is an outward expression or affirmation of their culture of conservation.

From the building layout to the smallest components that make up the building, their conservation message comes out loud and clear.

The extensive use of glass bricks and design strategies that open up spaces to the outside air, are design features that are not only esthetically pleasing but are also meant to cut energy use. These architectural elements are typical examples adopted by Japan's best known architect Tadao Ando, who has influenced today's modern architecture.

Other design features aimed at reducing energy consumption include extensive use of daylight and a variety of light sources. High-tech features include efficient lighting and automatic sensors for elevators and escalators that are shut down when not in use, solar panels and wind turbines.

(For comments or inquiries, e-mail [amadodejesus@gmail.com](mailto:amadodejesus@gmail.com).)

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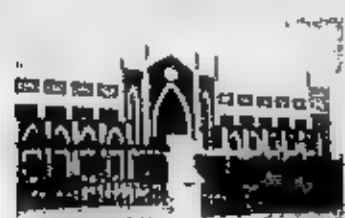
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## PROPERTY

# 2 DILG guidelines help developers vs delays

By Charles E. Buban

**U**NNECESSARY DELAYS in the issuance of certifications, clearance and permits for housing projects have been a common complaint among developers for years.

This was somehow solved with the passing in 2001 of Executive Order 45 that prescribes time periods in the processing of housing-related certifications, clearance and permits for each government agency and the local government unit.

This same law directs the sangguniang panlungsod/bayan, the city/municipal mayors to act on applications for development permits within 30 days from receipt of a complete application.

## More complaints

"However, another problem stemmed up. Our members have been complaining to the association as well as to the Department of the Interior and Local Government and the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council about delays in getting barangay clearances from the punong barangays, as well as complaints about some barangays imposing exorbitant fees for their clearances, or imposing fees not supported by a barangay ordinance," lamented Roy Calleja, national president of Subdivision and Housing Developers Association Inc.

Calleja related that to address this dilemma, the association's board officers, governors, advisers and committee chairpersons coordinated with Local Government Secretary Ronaldo Puno who later issued two guidelines and time periods in the issuance of development permits and barangay clearances for housing projects.

As a result, Puno issued two memorandum circulars—MC 132 on Oct. 2 and MC 143 on Nov. 7.

## Power given

He clarified that the Local Government Code of 1991 already gave the sanggunians of cities and municipalities the power to process and approve subdivision plans for housing purposes and that the sangguniang barangay should act on the application for a barangay clearance (a prerequisite before the issuance of a mayor's permit) within seven working days from its filing.

Failure to do so would automatically mean the city or municipal mayor may now issue the said license or permit.

To supplement this law, MC 132 enjoins the sangguniang panlungsod/bayan to strictly observe the time frame provided for under EO 45.

"Secretary Puno made it clear, through

the directive, that the amount of reasonable fee which shall be required for the issuance of a barangay clearance for a housing project, should only be that amount limited to cover only the cost of regulation as fixed by a barangay ordinance as stated in the Code," Calleja reported.

## No collection of fees

He said that in the absence of any barangay ordinance, the memorandum states that no fee should be collected in securing the same.

On the other hand, MC 143 reminds all punong barangays that in evaluating applications for barangay clearances by housing project proponents, documents required for submission in relation to the barangay clearance application shall only be limited to those which are relevant.

"The memorandum clarifies that such requirements should not anymore dwell on any other documents that pertains to matters not anymore within the scope of its regulations, such as financial statements, income tax returns, and the like, which a number of our members have been complaining about," Calleja said.

The two memorandums remind that failure to comply would result to administrative sanctions provided for under EO 45 and Republic Act 9485 (the Anti-Red Tape Act of 2007).

## AWESOME STRUCTURES

By Enman Cerna

## The Space Needle

THIS NEW YEAR'S EVE, THE revelry in Seattle will center on this 184-meter high structure nestled at the city's center. Expectedly, people would troop to the futuristic Space Needle to watch the annual fireworks display.

Completed in December 1961, the Space Needle served as the symbol of the 1962 World Fair. It has since become the symbol of Seattle, and one of the most recognizable structures in the world. The privately owned Space Needle is managed by the Space Needle Corp.

The Needle, designed by Edward E. Carlson, has been home to festive events in the city since its completion. It is also home to various retail shops, a pavilion, observation deck and a variety of restaurants.

The Space Needle is 184 meters high and 42 meters wide at its widest point and weighs 9,550 tons. When it was completed it was the tallest building west of the Mississippi River. It is built to withstand winds of up to 200 mph (320 kph) and earthquakes up to 9.5

magnitude. It also has 25 lightning rods on the roof to prevent lightning damage.

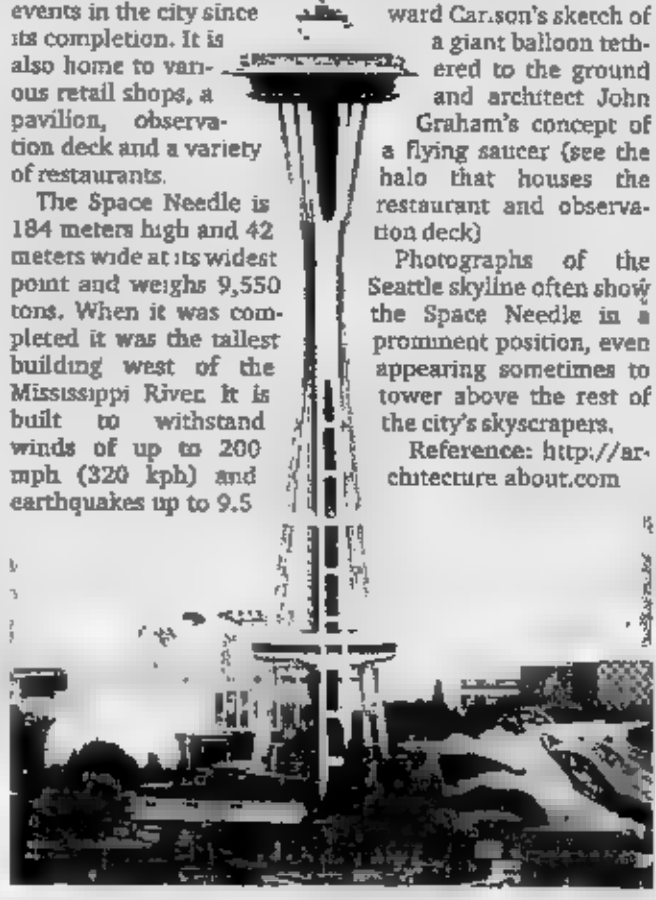
The structure features an observation deck at 160 meters, the SkyCity restaurant at 152 meters and a gift shop. From the top of the Needle, one can see not only the Downtown Seattle skyline, but also the Olympic and Cascade Mountains, Mount Rainier, Mount Baker, Elliott Bay and surrounding islands.

The architecture of the Space Needle is the result of a compromise between designs. The two leading ideas for the World Fair involved businessman Edward Carlson's sketch of

a giant balloon tethered to the ground and architect John Graham's concept of a flying saucer (see the halo that houses the restaurant and observation deck).

Photographs of the Seattle skyline often show the Space Needle in a prominent position, even appearing sometimes to tower above the rest of the city's skyscrapers.

Reference: <http://architecture.about.com>



## Creba supports BSP OFW retail bonds

THE CHAMBER OF REAL ESTATE AND Builders Associations (Creba) will go all-out in helping the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) promote the sale of government retail bonds exclusively for overseas Filipino workers (OFW) to raise the much-needed funds for infrastructure and housing for the low- and middle-income sectors.

This was announced by lawyer Manuel M. Serrano, Creba founder and board chair, as part of the organization's goals in 2008. The real estate advocacy organization is the industry's largest and oldest, with nationwide chapters and affiliates abroad in the United States, Europe and Southeast Asia. The primary objective of the special OFW bond issuance being projected by BSP is to

mobilize OFW remittances for investment purposes, instead of just being spent on consumption.

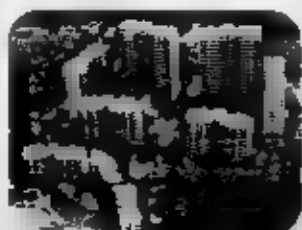
## Financial instrument

BSP Governor Armando M. Tetangco Jr. had earlier told media that a financial instrument specifically for overseas Filipinos is more necessary than ever with the continuous rise in remittances that end up being used for consumption spending. The proposed bonds will be modeled after the retail treasury bonds. The RTB model will be a good example where overseas Filipinos can buy either directly in the Philippines or through their beneficiaries, Tetangco said.

Major business organizations, which

have signed up to help carry out Creba's goal of countryside poverty alleviation, are the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI), Employers Confederation of the Philippines (Ecop), Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry Inc. (FCCC), Federation of Philippine Industries (FPI), Philippine Contractors Association (PCA), Philippine Exporters Confederation Inc. (PhilExport), Chamber of Mines of the Philippines (COMP), National Federation of Hog Farmers Inc. (NFHFI), Financial Executives Institute of the Philippines (Finex) and JCI Philippines (Philippine Jaycees). The Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP) will help provide financial requirements.

# Rush Hour



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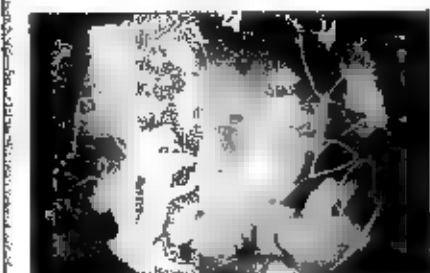
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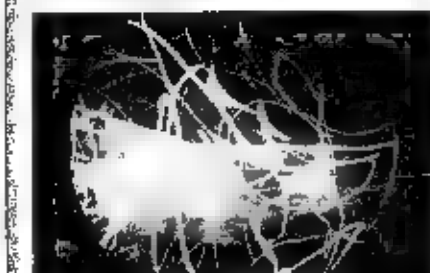
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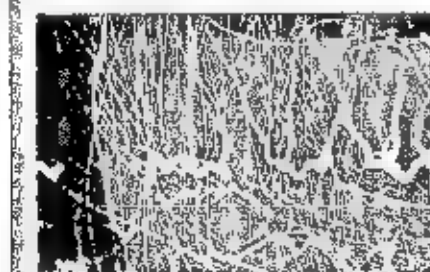
## Quiz Show

by Tals Diaz



## Nomad's Mileage

by Paolo Reyes



## Arkenology

by James Gabrillo



## And our top picks for



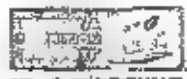
## Planning your New Year's

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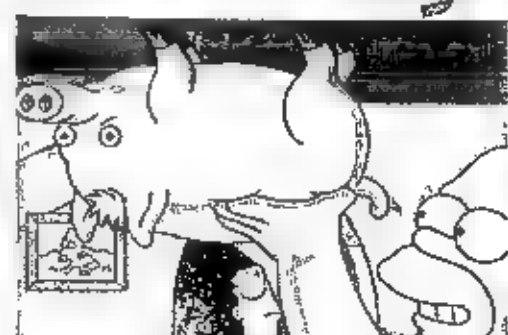
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OUT THE WINDOW

Tals Diaz

## Hammy New Year

1. This top-grossing film, about a tiny nation inhabited by alpha males who never skipped their 15-minute ab workout, is based on a historical battle that was retold in a graphic novel by Frank Miller. What was this famous historical battle? (11 letters)

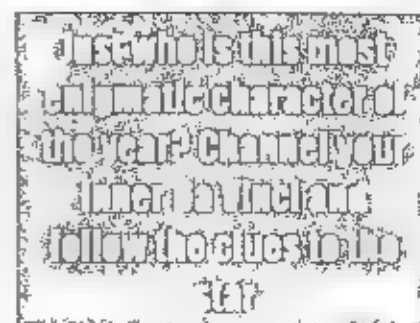
2. "Ratatouille" gave hope to all aspiring rodents who could beat Alan Ducasse in "Iron Chef" with an egg-beater. Which comic actor lent his voice to the Ichabod Crane looking restaurant critic who wrote his reviews in a coffin-shaped room? (Clue: he also plays the King of Stormhold in "Star dust") (11 letters)

ANGELINA JOLIE, VLADIMIR PUTIN, JK ROWLING—all these stellar figures in our corner of the universe undoubtedly rocked the year that was. Yet there is one Hollywood debutant, I believe, that stands out in the pop culture petri dish as the most influential figure of 2007. This was his year, after all. Just who is this enigmatic star? Channel your inner codebreaker and take this quizzicle that tests your trivia of this year's top movies. Then unscramble the boxed letters after to unlock the mystery character! (Answer key is on next page).

3. What blockbuster movie about warring clans is also known as "Prime Directive," which was its working title? (12 letters)

4. This Golden Globe nominee can be searched in the Internet Movie Database (IMDB) with these search tags: "Returning Character Killed Off," "Hole," "Obscene Finger Gesture," "Pig," and "Strauss Also Sprach Zarathustra." (16 letters)

5. This was the opening film of the 2007 Venice Film Festival, which made 35-year-old Joe Wright the youngest director to ever open the prestigious event. (Clue: it was adapted from a novel by Ian McEwan.) (9 letters)



6. This world-famous Hollywood director announced the Golden Globe nominees of 2007 wearing a Barong Tagalog, which could have been something he picked up during his Manila visit sometime in the middle of the year. (16 letters)

7. "30 Days of Night" was adapted from the Eisner Award-winning graphic novel series created by Steve Niles and Ben Templesmith. What kind of prehistoric natural creatures invaded the town of Barrow, Alaska, where the winter sun doesn't rise for 30 days? (8 letters)

8. In "Stardust," who plays the "notorious" Captain Shakespeare who mans a flying pirate ship, later on revealed to be a feather boa-wearing flameboy? (12 letters)

9. Like, whoa dude, what is the name of the reclusive old surfer who dispenses some much needed Zen on life and surfing to the young, ambitious pen pal Cody. (4 letters)

## The People Who Rocked 2007

By Wanggo Gallaga

### Al Gore

Former US Vice President Al Gore and his environmental activism led the most prominent trend of 2007—going green. He starred in the documentary "An Inconvenient Truth" which got people concerned. Not only did he manage to jumpstart a global movement by forcing people to care about the environment, he also raised funds for the kick-ass Live Earth concert which spread awareness about the need to combat climate change. The event brought together over 150 musical acts in over eleven locations around the world. If that didn't make him cool, he capped it off by winning the Nobel Peace Prize for all of that and then some.

### Johnny Depp

Johnny Depp has always been a solid performer but because of his love for strange and quirky roles, it seemed that an Academy Award that would cement his position as a serious actor was never within reach. It took Hollywood—and the world—some time, but they finally took notice of his genius when he played the eccentric Jack Sparrow in the "Pirates of the Caribbean" trilogy. The role got him his first Oscar nod which was followed by another with "Finding Neverland." 2007 welcomed Jack Sparrow again and the last part of the Pirates trilogy raked in \$135 million during its first three days, turning the character actor into a bona fide superstar. Depp also played Sweeney Todd this year, in the Tim Burton film adaptation of the Stephen Sondheim musical, gaining rave reviews and a very possible third Oscar nomination. Johnny Depp has not changed with his newfound stardom, becoming a beacon that tells celebrities you can be cool by being uncool.

### JK Rowling

The Harry Potter franchise is now a global brand that is worth an estimated \$15 billion. The final book, which came out this year, holds the record as



ROWLING in dough



CAPTAIN Planet

the fastest-selling book in history. The series has made Rowling the 13th richest woman in Britain and the second richest female entertainer in the world, second only to Oprah. She has been noted to have returned the spark of reading for children who have abandoned books for computer games and television. She has sold almost 400 million copies of her book worldwide. Read that and weep.

### Radiohead

The English alternative band released their 7th album this year that might actually be their most solid effort to date, and managed to do this without a recording contract. Produced out of their own pockets, Ra-

diohead released the whole album "In Rainbows" online as digital downloads with a "pay what you want" system where people can decide how much they want to pay for it. On the day the album was available for downloading, it was reported that 1.2 million copies of the album was sold and though the band doesn't want to release any figures, it was reported that an average of £10 was paid. Thom Yorke told Time Magazine, "I like the people at our recording company, but the time is at hand when you have to ask why anyone needs one... it would probably give us some perverse pleasure to say 'Fuck You' to this decaying business model." Indeed.

David and Victoria Beckham

The world's sexiest couple made a dramatic move from the cold, foggy climes of London to sunny LA where David Beckham was asked to play soccer for LA Galaxy for a whopping \$250 million with incentives. Spicing things up is Victoria's own fashion brand DVB fashion merchandise and a reunion tour with the Spice Girls that was sold out almost on the very day the tickets were available. With friends that include Hollywood superstar Tom Cruise and his wife Katie Holmes, 3 strapping sons and a bank account



THEY brought sexy back.



FREQUENT flyers

the size of a country's GNP, the Beckhams prove that you can have it all.

### On the home front

### Iza Calzado

Iza Calzado had a great year. As an actress, she is in the enviable position of not only having her fair share of the spotlight which includes another hit soap under her belt (Impostora), an indie film co-starring F4's Ken Chu (Batanes) and a movie which is an entry in this year's MMFF (Desperadas). She also bagged a role in the Hollywood film "The Echo." As a businesswoman, Iza is co-owner of The Tides in Boracay which has become one of the trendiest places to stay in the white beach paradise and has reportedly been completely fully booked that not even Iza can get a room for herself!

Marc Nelson and Rovilson

### Fernandez

The two self-proclaimed clowns of "Amazing Race Asia" is undoubtedly the favored team to win and the reason why so many people are watching the show. Without a doubt, their good looks and fun personality have captured the viewer's attention. Guys want to be them and girls want to be with them. Marc and Rovilson are definitely making the Philippines look good.

### Manny Pacquiao

The Pacman remains the Philippines' pride and joy and the man to beat. He represents the Filipinos as fierce competitors and is not, well, at least as fierce fighter. Manny Pacquiao cemented his fame as a champion boxer when he defeated Marco Antonio Barrera on their rematch. Honored as a Champ Emeritus by the World Boxing Council, the Pacman is one of the greatest boxers of his division.



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# Music and tabloids

A tabloid queen, a rise in originality, the absence of platform sneakers and songs you can't get out of your head—no doubt about it, 2007 was a great year in music



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REHAB QUEEN. Amy Winehouse



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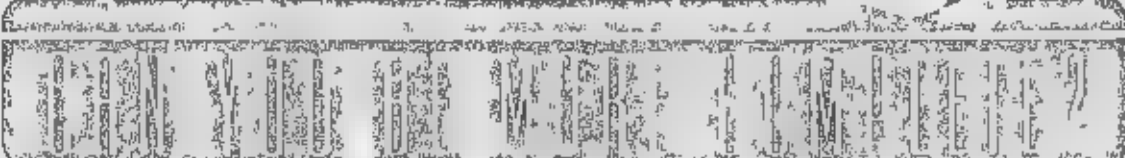
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## Answer key to Hammy new year:

year of the Spider-Pig! Hammy New Year to all!

BOXED LETTERS - R, P, S, I, E, P, D, G = SPIDERPIG. It was the

5. ATONEMENT

4. THE SIMPSONS MOVIE

9. GEEK

8. ROBERT DE NIRO

3. TRANSFORMERS

7. VAMPIRES

2. PETER O TOOLE

6. QUENTIN TARANTINO

1. THERMOPYLAE

## SAY GOODBYE TO SILENT NIGHTS.

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# ALASKA POWDERED FILLED MILK SPELLS VICTORY FOR YOUNG ATHLETES!

WHEN Alaska Powdered Filled Milk was casting for lead children to play the parts of the Victory Boy and Girl in their new TV commercial, there was no need to look far. At the Alaska Sports Clinic, there was a wealth of talented, sporty and athletic kids to choose from.

For the football ad, the unanimous choice was 9-year-old Renzo Macabulos. Renzo comes from a family of soccer

players. His brothers, Raphael and Robin, are strong football players in their respective age groups and Renzo is currently the captain of his football team. He has also won several football awards from his school. All the Macabulos boys take their cue from their mom, Mrs. Trixie Macabulos, who makes sure that Renzo and his brothers are happy, well motivated and healthy to pursue their professional football

dreams. She gives them Alaska Milk everyday so that they get all the vitamins and minerals they need to convert to energy on and off the football field.

Our Victory Girl is Sarah Castañeda. Sarah started playing sports at the young age of 5, and excels at both football and basketball. It is a tough feat for a proper and young girl like Sarah, but with the help of her mom,

Mrs. Lourdes "Deedee" Castañeda, Sarah is all set to be a top basketball dribbler and player. Mrs. Castañeda made sure that Sarah got her full nutrition needs with Alaska Powdered Filled Milk since she was young. Now at 10, Sarah continues to enjoy Alaska Powdered Filled Milk and this gives her all that she needs for her incredibly active lifestyle. Be it at the court or in school, Sarah is one girl everyone can look up to. From dribbling to making perfect shots, Sarah is perfect as the basketball girl in the Alaska Milk TV commercial.

## Batang Alaska ngayon, superstar bukas.



**Sa sustansya't lasa,  
wala pa ring tatalo**



Sports can be demanding on an adult, but it is even more demanding on children. Their Growth Gap years are the time when they discover sports or things that they can excel at. During this time they should get proper nutrition for maximum growth and potential.

For football and basketball, mental awareness, quick reflexes, speed, stamina, resistance to disease and strong bones are necessary for achieving success. Both team sports require rigorous and strict physical practice sessions as well as mental alertness to get them to victory. All these, on top of everyday homework, housework and socializing with friends, require a lot of caring and support from Mom.

Mothers know that a right diet, a good night's sleep and exercise are key to their child reaching their full potential. With Alaska Powdered Filled Milk after meals, she can be confident that her child is getting the right amount of nutrients and minerals in every glass. Mothers get the fulfillment of giving the best to their kids for them to achieve their full potential.

Together with Alaska, Moms and young athletes are headed towards victory. Walang tatalo sa pag-aaruga ng inay.

Wala pa ring tatalo sa Alaska.



# Breaking brave grounds

Arkeofilms is saving  
the movies (and  
Intelligent & Hip 2008)  
from the dumpster

IT MAY HAVE BEEN THE BRAND of humor, or the way everything looked good on screen, or the simple, striking premise that got me.

January 2005 I showed up at the press screening of "Big Time," one of the finalists of the first Cinemalaya Film Festival. Walking into that small theater, I had no idea what would soon hit me.

Less than two hours later, as the credits started rolling, I tried to figure out what just happened. What/who is behind Arkeofilms? Why did it take them so long to show their genius? Why is this film cool, who are those lead actors, and why is Michael de Mesa so funny?

That same week, I saw "Mansyon," another piece from Arkeo, and the festival's winner for Best Short Film. "Mansyon" blew me away for its subtle, stylish commentary on identity and relationships.

That's it, I told myself, I'm convinced. Three years and a horde of other gems later, Arkeo's proven that they're not on the playing field to merely make us laugh, or cry, or quiver, or do all three at the same time. They're breaking new grounds.

For the Arkeo team—headed by Joel Ruiz, Margie Templo, and Correen "Monster" Jimenez—it's about sharpening the pencils every single day.



**Monster Jimenez:**

Arkeofilms in its first couple of years was admittedly a sorry excuse for a production house. It was a hole in the wall with no equipment and no

staff. We were begging for any production work from friends of friends, and other such six-degree separations. We accepted every piece of project that came our way: weddings of strangers and relatives, corporate rah-rah videos for P5,000, and one time, event management.



**Margie Templo:**

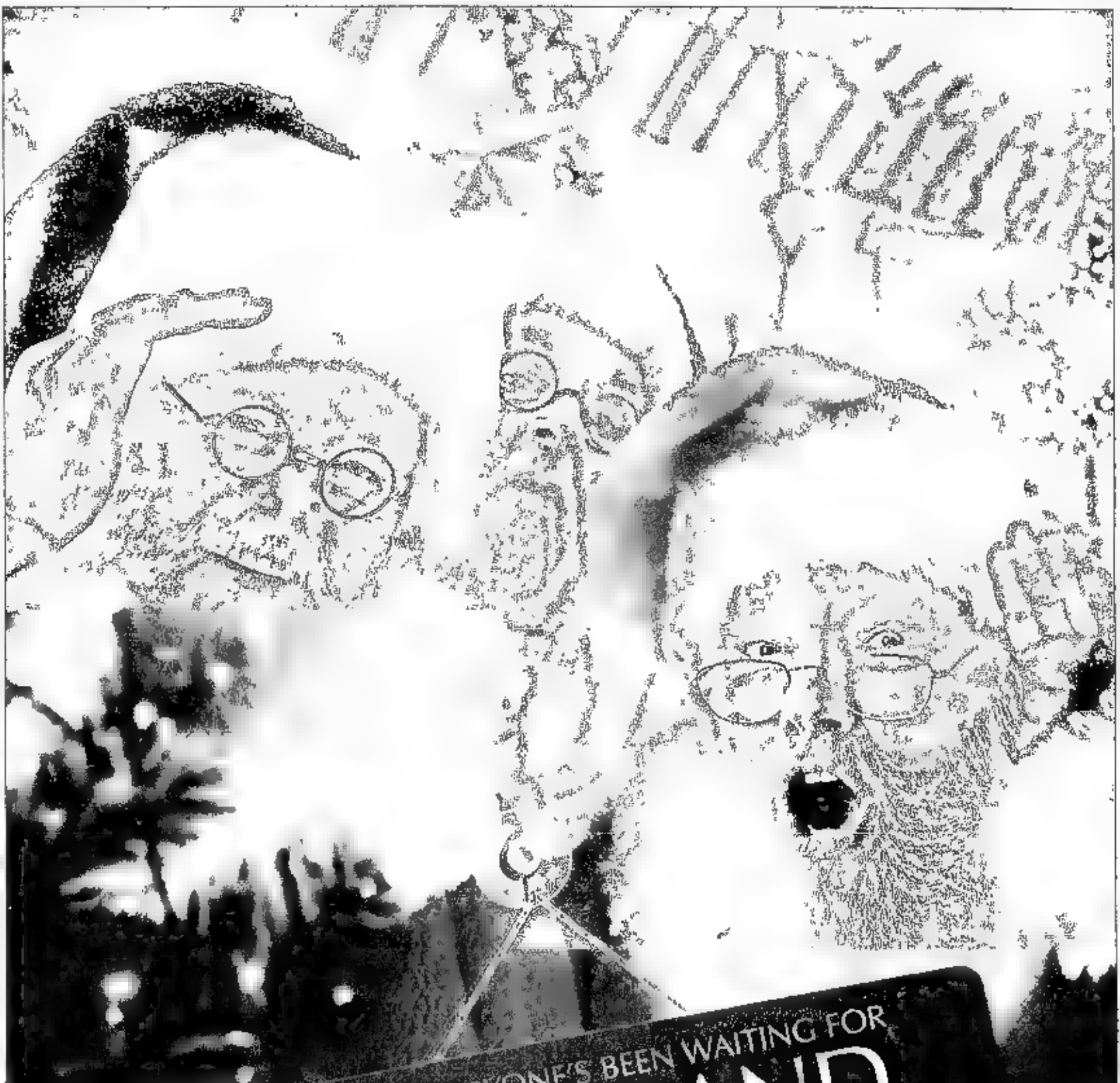
We were young, idealistic filmmakers who wanted to do our own thing. We didn't have money so we decided to make some by offering our services for AVP production to corporate clients and event agencies. We then put up our company in 2000. We've always had our eye on doing feature films, and finally in 2004 we shot Joel's short film "Mansyon," and Mario & Monster's "Big Time."



**Joel Ruiz:** In the beginning I would serve as both director and producer, then messenger, caterer, driver, hell even feed the client's cat if needed. Thankfully that was a

long time ago.

Margie: We had all been involved in the movie industry in different capacities. We decided to make our own films eventually, to make our own contribution. Our first films were ideas we'd had for some time. And when we felt prepared and



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**BREAKING/DT**

## BIG TIME



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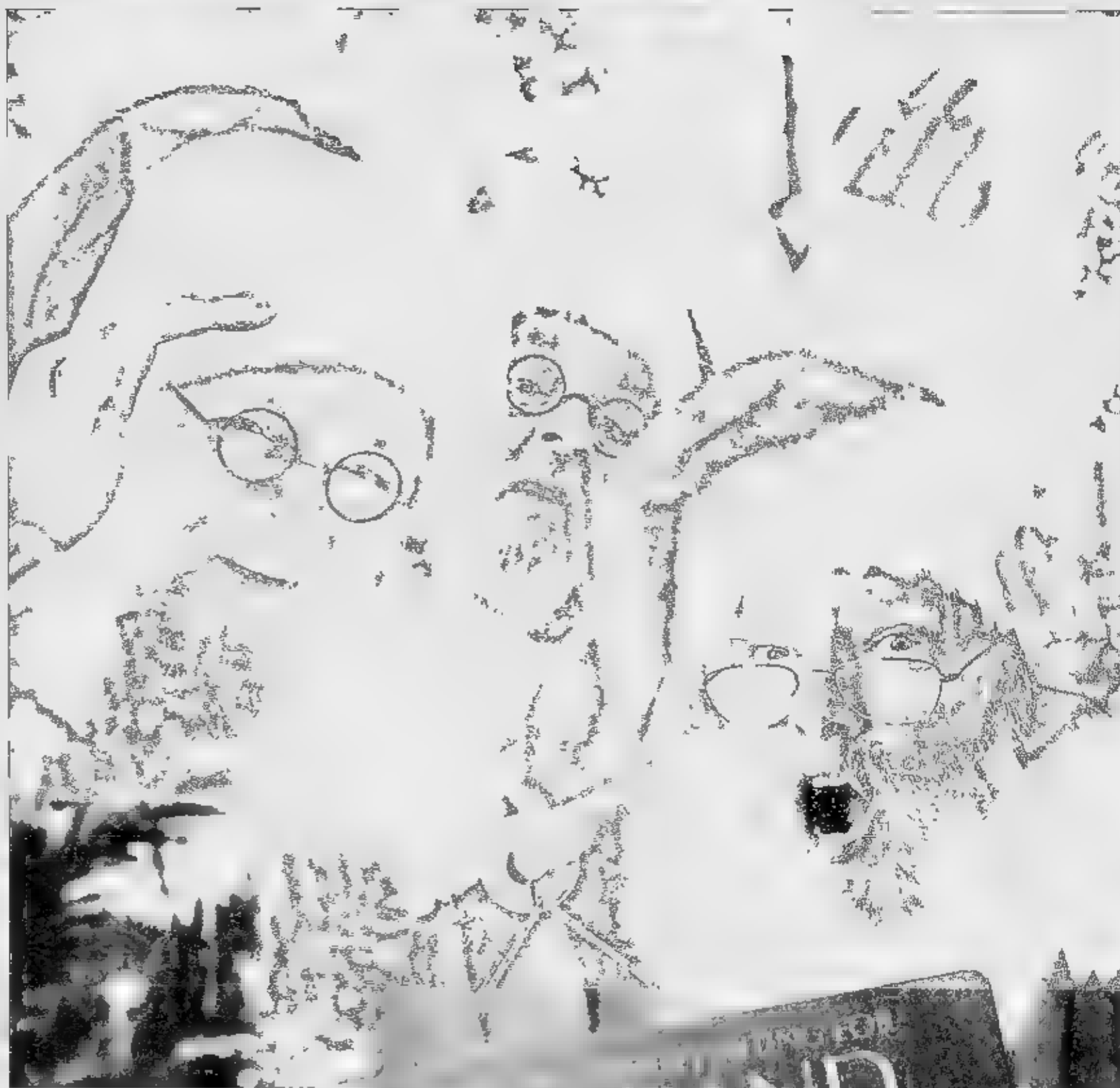
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**SM**  
**SUPERMALLS**

### RETAKE OF PRECEDING FRAME



# brave grounds

From page D2

equipped for the challenge, we went for it. But na lang din there was a venue—Cinemalaya.

Joe: Why—I think at some point there was no other choice. After a few years we thought, what are we here for but to do what we're supposed to do—make movies.

Monster: It's the greatest job in the world. We always wanted to make them from Day One, but there were wedding videos, sales, music videos of unknown singers, and a lot of begging that had to be done before it was even possible for the company to be ready to make movies.

Who/what have greatly influenced the company's creative decisions and styles?

Monster: Arkeo has three key people: Margie, Joe and I. So it's usually what moves us or vexes us. Also, the partner with the loudest voice that particular meeting will most likely be heard.

Margie: This varies from person to person. But we all studied film so we've had a healthy helping of foreign language films. Of course we watch a lot of Hollywood movies too. And so we're all story tellers. So most of our work so far has been narrative (or, in the case of "Kano," has a narrative element).

Joe: Personal tastes would dictate those decisions. A few were in retrospect, dumb and naive decisions, but most thankfully were smart ones. But all of those good and bad things brought us to where we are now, which I'd like to think is a place on the verge of being something big.

What aspects of filmmaking do you guys like to explore?

Joe: We'd like to explore new media. Movies, even little movies for TV, the internet, your cell phone.

Margie: *Mahilig kami sa* collaboration with key creative staff. We enjoy coming up with concepts but we would be nothing without our co-writers, our DOPs, our editors, production designers, sound designers and our scorers. And let's not forget the production staff. Arkeo's strength is in the concerted efforts of the entire team.

Monster: I feel guilty just



thinking about making movies for the smaller screen, like going to a part-time lover when I'm already with Big Screen. But I really want to explore more ways of showing stories other than the big screen. I want to see where all this talk of mobile downloads and user-generated content is going.

I always get the feeling from your films that you're trying to answer questions about identity (say, in "Mansyon") and culture ("Big Time") in a manner that the Filipino audience has never seen. Is this a conscious effort?

Margie: It's always a conscious effort to have believable characters and an accurate social and cultural setting. It's inevitable that we'll touch on identity and culture, I guess. But the themes of our films vary because basically we have different things to say.

Monster: I'm going to end up with a motherhood statement if we start on the vision of the company vis-à-vis the message of the movies. But it's really nowhere near that profound. It's really what story we want to tell at the moment.

How's a day like it, Arkeofilms?

Margie: Everything's generally peaceful in the morning. Same office work. Then from noon onwards, it's constant chaos. Endless meetings for concepts, for scripts, production meetings, marketing meetings, staff briefings, management meetings, phone calls, e-mail, editing, *merienda*, visits from friends. And on some days it's all quiet. *Nasa shoot kan lahat*.

Monster: Absolutely nothing in the morning. Nobody likes to go to work on a regular



morning. You can call 887 0906 but it will only be our cheerful office manager Mildred who will most likely be there. By noon, people start trickling in to do their usual production work. By 3 PM, Arkeo is in full swing. Production managers and assistants are heard over the din in bursts, "Food poisoning?!" "Sa'na tayo kakain ng PD?" or "Sa'na naman ako hahanap ng fire truck para bukas?"

Joe: Well not *naman* nothing in the morning. Just nothing interesting enough to print. A lot of company administration happens in the morning, i.e., accounting, bill paying, marketing calls, what-not. The fun stuff happens after lunch, and a day ends, on average, at 10 p.m. Although it's not surprising to have a "day" end at 2 a.m. As for the people: it's a varied bunch. People of all persuasions drop by—artists, bankers, writers, etc.—whether to work on a project or just to use the Wi-Fi. It's a busy, lively, energetic place, and because it's a small office it can get pretty crowded. Some days we're on our

Sunday best because a client is coming over or we have a meeting; other days I dress like I just rolled out of bed.

What were some of Arkeo's most memorable moments?

Margie: We have many fond memories since we've been working together for almost seven years. We recall holding office on Malingap Street in Teacher's Village, and then on Katipunan, before moving to Makati. But among the most memorable moments was Cinemalaya 2005 awards night. Finally, we were making movies!

Joe: There was the time long ago when we got our very first fax machine and we called it Jenny. I thought that was a good day.

Monster: Like a slum book I will have to answer MTM.

What about the biggest challenges that you guys had to face?

Joe: How to stretch a meager budget into a full-blown production that suits the quality that we're used to doing. Although we're quite used to it.

Monster: My most common, although not biggest challenge, has been to explain to people why in the world we chose the name Arkeo. And I will not tell you why.

The lowest point would probably have to be some time in 2004 when there were real talks of possibly closing Arkeofilms. All the videos of *kamag-anaks* had been milked and the six degree connections were running low. We were broke and discouraged and felt like we were going round and round, until we decided that it would be best to just continue and be spared from the 20 million questions of parents and friends. In other words, for this one, pride saved us.

Our toughest challenge to date is finding a system that will ultimately be pro-creator. The objective is to produce content on a regular basis (movies, shows, downloadable), and making money in the process. We're still grappling for a formula at this point, but we have looked and asked around and no such model in this country exists. How can one make decent profit from a movie and still respect the rights and integrity of the author/s of the movie?

Do you ever think about commercial success? Do you ever take into account what the audience is willing to accept?

Joe: Yes we do. But we don't default to doing what will sell. We want to help develop audience tastes. Or at least give an alternative. We don't want movies that people will just watch. We want to make them think, feel, participate. But we don't want to rub it in their face either, like THIS IS AN ARKHOUSE FILM, SMART PEOPLE ONLY PLEASE!!! No. If people won't see your film, what's the point? But for me, screening a film and having ten people deeply affected, bothered, even feeling for the film, is much better than a hundred thousand people who flocked in droves but left the cinema with no other feeling except to eat Jollibee.

Monster: I obsess over the tools I need to reach as many people as possible, but sometimes I am wary of thinking too much about commercial success. I'm afraid of what comes with putting that in the way we make our movies. The showbiz-ness of it terrifies me: press-cons, ostentatious premieres, hobnobbing.

I borrow this insight from Mario Cornejo, who borrowed this insight from Kurt Vonnegut. When I think of a movie, I think of specific people I know whom I think will enjoy the movie. When we did "Big Time," Mario Cornejo (the director) and I thought of five people who will probably enjoy it. Arkeofilms wants to create content that people will like to see. But we will not do a Palsta Corrales, just to get closer to the box-office.

What are you doing next?

Joe: More movies are in the works. We have two shorts, one full-length narrative, one full-length documentary in production, and another full-length narrative in development (see sidebar). We're also developing some new content for alternative media: the internet, mobile phones, and some television as well.

We are also looking into foreign co-production for our films. Already a film of ours in development has been drumming up some interest in Europe. Let's hope that happens.

## THE GOODS

**MANSYON (THE MANSION) (2005)**

Written and Directed by Joel Ruiz  
Produced by Margie Tempio  
Short film (23 min)  
A maid and her gardener husband are hired to take care of a large house while its owners are away.  
Best Short Film at Cinemalaya 2005.  
Official selection at Fribourg Singapore, NY Asian-American, Hawaii, Mumbai, IFFs.



**BIG TIME (2005)**

Directed by Mario Cornejo  
Written by Mario Cornejo and Monster Jimenez  
Produced by Monster Jimenez  
Full-length film (104 min)  
Two small-time criminals attempt to pull off a kidnapping heist.

with disastrous, hilarious results. Starring Michael de Mesa, Nor Domingo, Winston Elizalde, Jamie Wilson and Joanne Miller. Best Screenplay at Cinemalaya 2005. Nominated for 11 Asian Awards, including Best Picture. Now out on DVD at most video stores.

**PIYOT (2005)**

Written and Directed by Jack Cogama  
Produced by Joel Ruiz  
Short film (17 min)  
A boy who lives in a squatter colony by the sea forms a friendship with a young girl. Urlian for Best Short Film in competition at Clermont-Ferrand Int'l Short Film Festival.



**ANG KAPATID NONG SA ELIMS (2006)**

Directed by Joel Ruiz  
Written by Monster Jimenez and Michiko Yamamoto  
Produced by Butch Jimenez  
Short film (35 min)  
Part of the "Paraiso: Tatlong Kuwento ng Pag-asa" trilogy of Gawad Kalayaan. A heartwarming comedy about a GK family who adopts a rock-eating boy. With Michael V. Carril Martin, Gian Bernabe and Paulken Bustillo.

**SAMMY AND FELIPE (2006)**

Directed by Joel Ruiz  
Written by Joel Ruiz and Tara Saring  
Produced by Margie Tempio  
Short film currently in production  
A day in the life of a young boy with his grifter father. Adapted from a Butch Dalisay story.

**CONNIE (2006)**

Directed by Joel Ruiz  
Written by Joel Ruiz and Tara Saring  
Produced by Margie Tempio  
Short film currently in production  
A woman overcomes the grief of losing her adopted son. Adapted from a Butch Dalisay story.

**NAME: THE AMERICAN AND HIS HAREM (2008)**

Directed by Monster Jimenez  
Produced by Mario Cornejo and Margie Tempio  
A full-length documentary (currently in production) about an unconventional family system in Bacolod. It tells the story of an incarcerated Vietnam war veteran and the women in his life. A grantee of the NCCA.

**BABY ANGEL (2008)**

Directed by Joel Ruiz  
Written by Abi Aquino and Joel Ruiz  
Produced by Monster Jimenez  
Full-length film premiering July 2008. Finalist at Cinemalaya 2008.  
When an aborted fetus is found in the dumpster of a rundown apartment complex, an informal investigation ensues. A reclusive old man with curious ramblings, a landlord with an overzealous thirst for justice, and a

are just some of the tenants whose lives are suddenly exposed in the search for the murderer of the baby in the garbage.

**ANGYU-NANA, PAKOT-MOT (NP, ROMM, ROMM AND ROMM) (2008)**

Directed by Joel Ruiz  
Written by Joel Ruiz and Monster Jimenez  
Produced by Margie Tempio  
Full-length film in development  
A loner and a school teacher lead mundane separate lives, peppered with ordinary struggles and crushing setbacks, until a tragedy forces the two lives to intersect and finally, give hope. This film has already been selected twice to prestigious project development markets in Europe.

## What a Wander World

Reaching for some clouds of white and skies of blue? Travel far and away from the tourist radar in 2008

**1**  
**Algeria**  
For STARRY-EYED Pinoy travelers wending their way through the immaculately chaotic Naia airport, the prospect of boarding a jumbo jet bound for some quixotic destination is usually enough incentive to curb their contemptuous, curling lips.

But, sometimes, the so-called advocates of "slow travel" may be a little dismayed with the destination itself.

Even the most romantic Middle Eastern monu-

ments bear witness to a never-ending crush of camera-wielding tourists, and sneaker-clad, cruise ship fossils who can easily impale you with their umbrella tips.

For global nomads seeking solitude and some breathing space, try Google Earth-

ing these low-profile destinations for your 2008 itinerary. The images might be a tad fuzzy, but they're way off the tourist radar, and will definitely

conjure from your mind's eye a vision of a



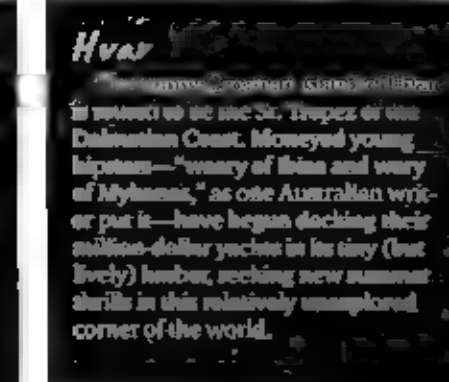
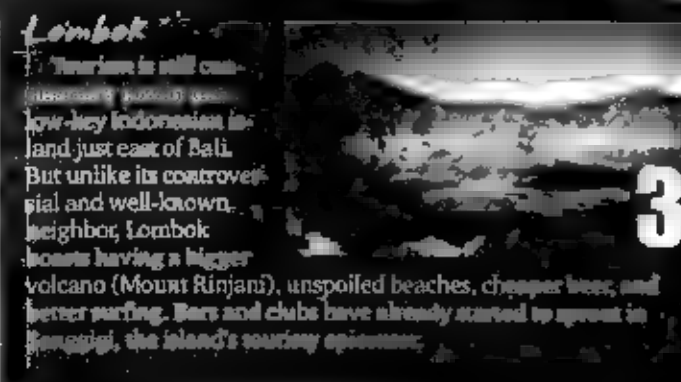
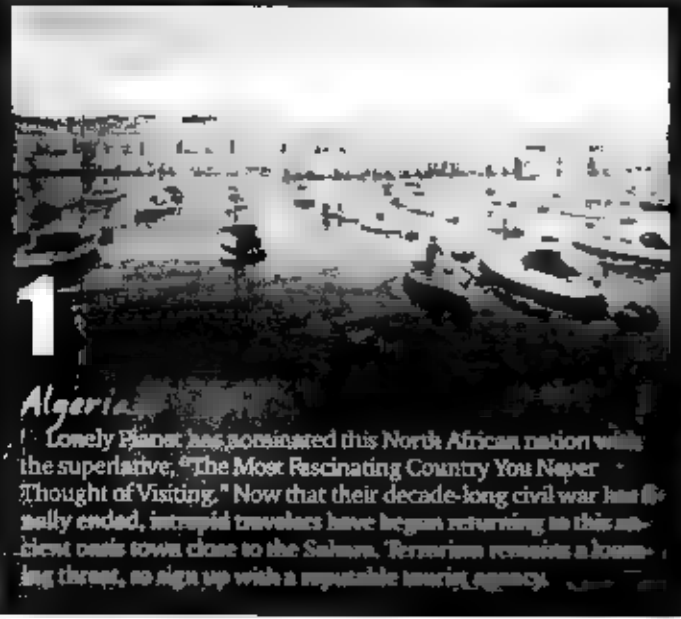
**2**  
**Laos**

The New York Times called it "The Indochina's next hot spot." Enigmatic Laos offers smoking rivers, lush jungles, and the UNESCO-listed Plain of Jars—a mysterious, 500-square-mile plain littered with thousands of ancient stone jars. Luang Prabang, with its French colonial architecture and emerald green mountains, is a travel photographer's dream.

**LOST IN TRANSIT**



**Paolo R. Reyes**



# Breaking brave grounds

From page D2

Joe: I was no other...  
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## THE GOODS

MANSON (THE MANSION) (2005)

Written and Directed by Joel Ruiz  
 Produced by Margie Tempio  
 Short film (23 min)  
 A maid and her gardener husband are hired to take care of a large house while its owners are away.  
 Best Short Film at Cinemalaya 2005  
 Official selection at Fribourg, Singapore, Pesaro, NY Asian-American, Hawaii, Mumbai IFFs



NO TIME (2005)

Directed by Mario Cornejo

Written by Mario Cornejo and Monster Jimenez

Produced by Monster Jimenez

Full-length film (104 min)

Two small-time criminals attempt to pull off a kidnapping heist

with disastrous, hilarious results. Starring Michael de Mesa, Nor Domingo, Winston Elizalde, Jamie Wilson and Joanne Miller. Best Screenplay at Cinemalaya 2005. Nominated for 11 Urian Awards including Best Picture. Now out on DVD at most video stores

Written and Directed by Jack Cogama

Produced by Joel Ruiz

Short film (17 min)

A boy who lives in a squatter colony by the sea forms a friendship with a young girl.

Juan for Best Short Film in competition at Clermont-Ferrand Int'l Short Film Festival.

Directed by Joel Ruiz

Written by Joel Ruiz and Tara Siring

Produced by Margie Tempio

Short film currently in production

A woman overcomes the grief of losing her adopted son. Adapted from a Butch Daisay story.

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## What a

itching for some clouds of white and skies of blue? Travel far and away

FROM THE MARCH 10, 2008 ISSUE

FOR STARRY-EYED Pinoy travelers wending their way through the immaculate but chaotic Nauru airport the prospect of boarding a jumbo jet bound for some quixotic destination is usually enough incentive to curb their on temptu rous, curling lips

But, sometimes, the so-called advocates of "slow travel" may be a little dismayed with the destination itself.

Even the most romanticized European alleyways and monolithic Middle Eastern monu-

ments bear witness to a never-ending crush of camera-wielding tourists, and sneaker-clad cruise ship fossils who can easily impale you with their umbrella tips.

For global nomads seeking solitude and some breathing space try Google Earth

ing these low-profile destinations for your 2008 itinerary. The images might be a tad fuzzy, but they're way off the tourist radar, and will definitely keep your strained nostrils from flaring in frustration.

LOST IN TRANSIT



Paolo R. Reyes

## World







## '07's SUP

The supercrew stayed glued on the tube this year. Blame the following

## 1. Pushing Daisies

It premiered two months ago, and charmed audiences worldwide. The best show of the year has the most fantastic premise: pie maker Ned can bring the dead back to life with a single touch. A great script matched with Tim Burtonesque production design, "Pushing Daisies" pitch-perfectly brings an awesome storybook to life.

## 2. 30 Rock

Preposterously genius writing. Subversive dialogue and pop culture references thrown with style. Absolutely no effort exerted to be PG. Tina Fey, of course. And we can't believe there would come a time when we would say this: Alec Baldwin. Hands down—the funniest thing on the tube.

## 3. Hustle

Focusing on the adventures of a gang of London-based con artists, this hyper-stylized British comedy-drama series is a gem that not a lot of Pinoys have gotten the chance to see. With its clever plot twists, excellent cinematography, fantasy sequences, playful misdirection, and top-notch acting, the series flawlessly plays a confidence game with the viewers. Funny thing is, in the end, we find ourselves as the ones tricked by the con guys.

## 4. Lost

After a rousing and forceful third season, the show—with its unforgettable cast and fictional universe—remains to be a critical and popular success. A little trivia: "Lost" will air its final episode on May 2010—on its sixth season.

## 5. Chuck

A socially awkward computer whiz receives an e-mail that embeds the world's greatest spy secrets into his brain. Immediately, he is "hired" by the States' intelligence agencies to help save the day from the bad guys. "Chuck" is funny and mind-blow-



ing—how do they think of these things?

## 6. Big Love

A big family that's keeping a big secret from the outside world—this is "Big Love." Well researched, uniquely outrageous, emotionally real, and just plain original. Plus, its theme song, The Beach Boys' "God Only Knows," is pretty neat.

## 7. Heroes

The character development of everybody's favorite sci-fi series just keeps on getting better and better.

## 8. Gossip Girl

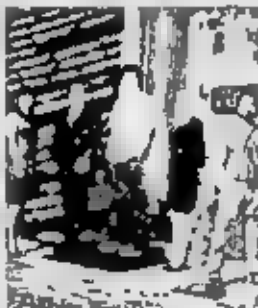
You know you love it. Revolving around the lives of New York's Upper East Side young adults studying in elite high schools, the series is nothing but entertaining. And addictive.

## 9. Top Chef

We would've picked the hilarious "Hell's Kitchen" to take this slot, but we realized (after a heap of episodes) that "Top Chef" is really on a different league. The secret of the success of the show's third season is its amazing, talented cast.

## 10. Project Runway

Bravo's reality show, now on its season, is one design mayhem. 'Nuff said.



Chuck



Gossip Girl



**OLYMPUS**  
AMAZING TRADE-IN!!!  
**OLYMPUS**

1. Customers will just bring their old cellphone, digital or film cameras of any brand/model/series working or not working to the following SM Department stores: SM Fairview, SM North EDSA, SM Megamall, SM Makati, SM Sucal, SM Bicutan, SM Southmall, SM Bacoor, SM Dasmariñas, SM Lucena, SM Batangas, SM Cubao, SM Baguio, SM Marikina, SM Mall of Asia, SM Manila, SM Centerpoint, SM San Lazaro, SM Taytay, SM Harrison.

2. Upon surrender of the items, customer automatically gets a P3,000.00 discount for his purchase of a M760.

3. Promo will run from December 15, 2007 to February 15, 2008.

Per DTI MCR Permit No. 4875 Series of 2007

SM  
AIRTEL • NO. HILLS • MEGAMALL • MAKATI • SUCAL • BICUTAN • BACOR • DASMARIÑAS • LUCENA • BATANGAS • CUBAO • BAGUIO • MARIKINA • MALL OF ASIA • MANILA • CENTERPOINT • SAN LAZARO • TAYTAY • HARRISON

**Suzuki**  
**motorshow**

**FULL THROTTLE AT NATIONWIDE MOTORSHOW**  
**Suzuki leads the turn to a motorcycle-loving society**

**motorshow**

**SUZUKI**

**INSIDE**  
**MOTOLITE**  
**AMOUNT**  
**SM**  
**UTI**  
**EXTREME**



# 36<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Christmas SALE!

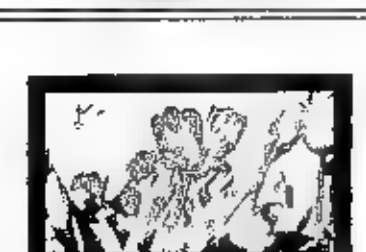
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**VIZON**  
**LCD-42CA8Z**  
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• 16.7 million colors, HDMI, PIP  
• HD Ready (720p/1080i/1080p)  
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**SRP:**  
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**VIZON**  
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• 37" WXGA resolution  
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**LCD-32CA8Z**  
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**SRP:**  
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**CASH**  
**LESS**  
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on CASH or straight credit  
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**12 MONTHS**  
**LESS P8,000**  
on 12 months at 0% interest  
**P8,249.59**  
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**24 MONTHS**  
24 months at 0% interest  
**P4,458.12**  
per month

**ABSOLUTELY FREE**  
**VPC-S700**  
digital camera

with every purchase  
of SANYO VIZON LCD  
for the first 15 customers  
per dealer branch!



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**A** ADD P5,000 and  
get a SANYO  
21" FLAT TV  
(ST-21VF1)



**B** ADD P6,000  
and get a  
SANYO personal  
refrigerator  
(SR-8K)



**C** ADD P6,500  
and get a  
SANYO 0.5HP  
Air Conditioner  
(SA-56P)



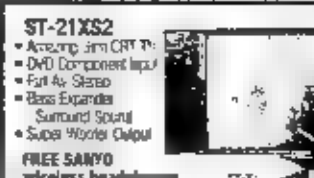
Also includes FREE VPC-S700 SANYO Digital Camera



**ST-29YS2**  
• Full Size CRT TV  
• DVD Component Input  
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**FREE SANYO**  
wireless headphones  
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**ST-21FS2**  
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• DVD Component Input  
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wireless headphones  
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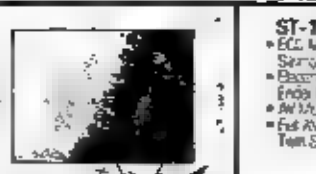
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• Full AV Stereo  
• Bass Expander  
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**FREE SANYO**  
wireless headphones  
& TV Rack  
**P10,995** 12mos.  
0% interest



**ST-21VF1 FLAT TV**  
• ECO Mode for Saving Energy  
• DVD Component Input  
• Elegant Double Entry Design  
• Full AV Stereo  
• Surround Sound  
**FREE SANYO** wireless headphones  
& TV Rack  
**P7,495** 6mos. 0% interest



**ST-21SE1V**  
• ECO Mode for Saving Energy  
• DVD Component Input  
• Full AV Stereo  
• Twin Speakers  
• Elegant Double Entry Design  
**SAVE P500**  
**P6,495** 3mos.  
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**ST-14SE1V**  
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• Twin Speakers  
• Elegant Double Entry Design  
**SAVE P500**  
**P4,495** 3mos.  
0% interest



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• Twin Speakers  
• Elegant Double Entry Design  
**SAVE P500**  
**P4,295** 3mos.  
0% interest

## SANYO REFRIGERATORS

**SR-F78M(SS) 18cu.ft.**  
**NO FROST**  
• 25% energy saving  
• High Efficient Motor  
• Nano-Freeze System  
• Jv-LED & Platinum  
Beam Defroster  
• Wide Multi Air Flow  
Side Air Flow  
**FREE**  
**GAS STOVE**  
**P44,000**  
18mos. 0% interest  
**LESS P6,000**  
For CASH Buyers

**SR-F42M(SS) 10cu.ft.**  
**NO FROST**  
• 25% energy saving  
• High Efficient Motor  
• Nano-Freeze System  
• Jv-LED & Platinum  
Beam Defroster  
• Wide Multi Air Flow  
Side Air Flow  
**FREE**  
**GAS STOVE**  
**P26,000**  
12mos. 0% interest  
**LESS P2,500**  
For CASH Buyers

**SR-F225(S) 6.5cu.ft.**  
• Big Freezer Wide Body  
• Pre-Coated Metal  
• Multi Air Flow Cool  
• Nano Freeze Filter  
• Carbon Deodorizer  
**FREE**  
**GAS STOVE**  
**P15,995**  
6mos. 0% interest  
**LESS P800**  
For CASH Buyers

**SR-D39M 10 cu.ft.**  
**2-DOOR DIRECT COOL**  
• New Press Designed Door  
• New Grip Handle  
• Cycle Defrost  
• Electro Galvanized Steel  
**FREE**  
**GAS STOVE**  
**P15,295**  
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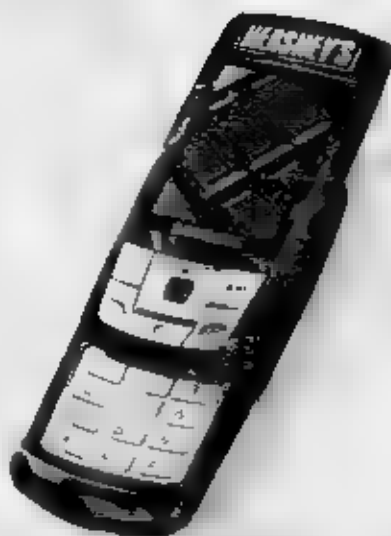
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**BEFORE** the grandeur of the age of Disco past this New Year's Eve in Manila when actress Jenine Desiderio takes the stage as Donna Summer in

**Onstage Theater**, 2/F, Greenbelt 1, Ayala Center Makati City at 8 p.m. Sing and dance along to Donna Summer's hits such as "Hot Stuff," "On the Radio" and "Last Dance." For tickets call 891-9999.

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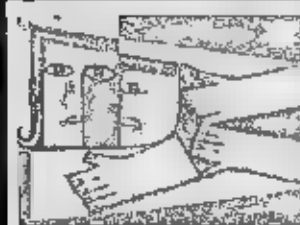
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**FEEL** the throbbing beats and groove to the best disco and dance tracks from the 70s to the 90s at the **DecoDance New Year's Eve Party** featuring Boyet Almazan at Jili's [T-818-4567], The Fort, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig. The fun starts at 11 p.m. Dec. 31 until sunrise of Jan. 1. Burn those unwanted holiday calories at Retro Manila's hottest and longest-running weekly dance party! No cover or minimum charge.



**SEE** the visual interpretation of affection between mother and child in the Filipino Christmas tradition in Gugma n Alvarado, an exhibit at

ago Bluewater Resort in Mactan Island in Cebu, featuring paintings of Filipino artist N. netucio Alvarado.



**THE VISUAL INTERPRETATION OF AFFECTION BETWEEN MOTHER AND CHILD IN THE FILIPINO CHRISTMAS TRADITION** is the theme of the exhibit "Gugma n Alvarado" by N. netucio Alvarado. The exhibit is a collection of paintings that depict the love and affection between mothers and children during the Christmas season. The paintings are displayed in a gallery setting, allowing visitors to appreciate the artist's skill and the cultural significance of the theme.

**IMMERSE** the joy of learning a new skill and craft this New Year and sign up for the **Screenwriting Workshop Series** in ongoing workshops for filmmaking every Saturday, from 2 to 5 p.m. at the **Independent Filmmakers Workshop**, 1000, e-mail: [screenwriting@yahoos.com](mailto:screenwriting@yahoos.com). The classes for January will cover material, script development and management, and five sessions on alternative production. Be on your way in your dream to be the next *Spirited Away* or *Spinal Tap*. Limited slots available and only committed students will be accepted.

**TASTE** the great flavors of dishes made from organic ingredients at **Green Bites** [T-922-2409]. There's no prominent signage but the place is easy to find—20 Maginhawa St., JP Village, Quezon City.

**THE VISUAL INTERPRETATION OF AFFECTION BETWEEN MOTHER AND CHILD IN THE FILIPINO CHRISTMAS TRADITION** is the theme of the exhibit "Gugma n Alvarado" by N. netucio Alvarado. The exhibit is a collection of paintings that depict the love and affection between mothers and children during the Christmas season. The paintings are displayed in a gallery setting, allowing visitors to appreciate the artist's skill and the cultural significance of the theme.

## 24/7 SUPER RADAR

By Philip Sison, Our Weekend Editor

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*Happy Holidays!*

**RELIVE** the grandeur of the age of Disco past this New Year's Eve in Manila when actress Jen na Desiderio takes the stage as Donna Summer in "Queen of Disco: The Musical Journey of Donna Summer" at the **OnStage Theater**, 2/F, Greenbelt 1, Ayala Center, Makati City at 8 p.m. Sing and dance along to Donna Summer's hits such as "Hot Stuff," "On the Radio" and "Last Dance." For tickets call 891 9999.

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and a la carte menus will be offered at the Prince Albert Rotisserie on New Year's Eve and for dinner on New Year's Day. For a more festive gathering the Café Jeepney offers a sumptuous dinner and lunch buffet of local favorites as well as international dishes.

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For reservations and more information, call 793-7000. Quoted prices are inclusive of VAT and are subject to 10-percent service charge and 8-percent local government tax.



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Astoria Plaza is managed with distinction by Genesis Hotels and Resorts Corp.

## ASB Condotel's dines top accounts

ASB CONDOTELS AND RESORT RECENTLY hosted its first-ever appreciation dinner for its top accounts Dec 7 at Joey Pepperoni restaurant at The Fort, Taguig.

The '50s Hollywood-themed event honored each company for their continued patronage of all of ASB Condotel's properties namely, Prince Plaza II, Asian Mansion II, and BSA Mansion at Makati's business and leisure district, and The Garden Heights, located right at the heart of the entertainment capital and medical hub of Quezon City.

The honorees were treated to an evening of great food, fabulous raffle prizes, and sweet serenades that befit only these stars of the night.

Bernadette S. Cantos, chief operating officer of ASB Condotel's and Resort is the Philippines' Leading Condotel Managers with over a decade of service excellence and satisfied guests.



The ASB Condotel's and Resort Sales & Marketing Team with COO Ms. Bernadette Cantos with some of the awardees.

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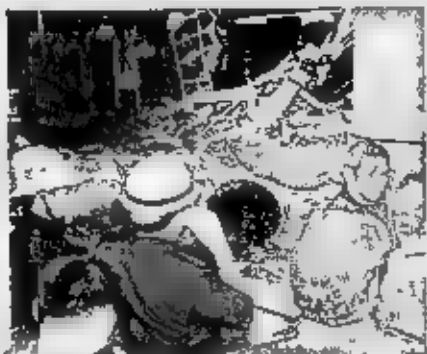
products, and a gift certificate for Jan. 6, 2008, valid for local residents only. For inquiries or reservations, call 528-5855 or 528-8888.

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# Ten reasons we loved the nightlife in 2007

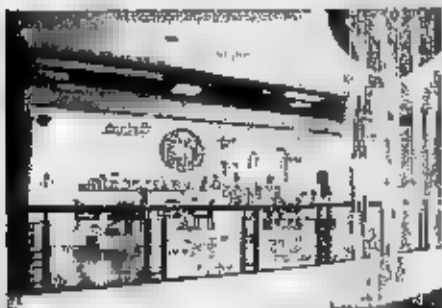
AS THE SAYING GOES, "TIME FLIES WHEN YOU'RE HAVING fun," and 2007 flew fairly fast, with all the pomp, glamour and vague recollections trailing at its wake. Good thing we have digital pictures (especially from our ubiquitous mobile phone cameras) to remember them by. In David Letterman fashion, here are the top ten events that made 2007 truly heart pounding.



**10** The powerful blast at Gloria 2, which sent Rock Candy (former site of Citrus, V Bar and Venezia) to nocturnal oblivion.



**9** That the one-night curfew imposed after the short-lived Trilanes "situation" did not dampen the spirits of the city's night crawlers and legions of Akon fans who trooped to Araneta to catch his concert. The Trilanes caper left everyone asking if the senator had lost all his marbles and if a tank actually fit into the lobby of the iconic Manila Pen. Talk about a gate-crasher.



**8** While we bade a lot of old dining haunts goodbye, we said hello to several new ones. Segafredo, Uva, Zhongnanhai, Pasha, Lumiere, Maito Teak, Tavern On The Square, Globa, Café, 6 Underground, Hana, Hue, Soul Food, and Zen among others took their final bows and gave way to steak houses Mamou and Ebert's Steak Room, other restos like Cyma, Sala (which moved to its new home in Makati), Chelsea, Balducci, Barolo, Thai At Silk, Cantinetta, Tropez, and C-2 Events Place.



**7** The birth of the super bookstore Fully Booked at Bonifacio High Street set the standard for how a bookstore should look like. Barnes & Noble and Borders would be hard put to top this one.



**6** Facebook (www.facebook.com). Who hasn't heard of it? Poking someone has never been this fun! Plus you can send Margaritas and Mojitos to your friends without having to open your wallet. That in itself is worth signing up. Join the party going on there every night (and day).



**5** The sleekly designed gadgets that keep us always connected. The iPhone, iPod Third Gen Nano, iPod Touch, iPod Classic, iMac, iLove them all!



**4** The events and shows that we can't seem to get enough of—the 3rd Annual 24/7 Nocturnal Awards (please forgive this shameless self-promotion!), the launches of the Philippine edition of Town and Country Magazine and the edgy Rogue, the W Records series of weekly concerts, DJs Steve Aoki and Little Louie Vega, slam bang URCC 11, Taste Of Taguig and Ticked Pink Food Festivals, theater pieces Avenue Q, Dogeaters, and Fiddler On The Roof were some of the most memorable.

**3** The growing popularity of new retail and dining concepts such as Archeology and Block 9 in Rockwell's Power Plant Mall, The Fort's Bonifacio High Street and Serendra, Quezon City's The Block and Trinoma, and Greenbelt 5 in Ayala Center, Makati.



**1** The great two-oh-oh-seven was the year of foreign artists. More international superstars flew in to rock our world this year than in any other year. In no particular order Ziggy Marley, Christina Aguilera, Switchfoot, Fall Out Boy, Click Five, Josh Groban, Beyonce, Akon, Vertical Horizon, American Idol winner Taylor Hicks, and finalist Elliot Yamin, we also had basketball superstar Kobe Bryant, barong-clad director Quentin Tarantino and literary heavyweight Neil Gaiman who graced this year's Philippine Ad Congress.

**2** The opening of the super clubs and bars—four huge clubs and two bars to be exact Warehouse 135, Alchemy, Ascend, and the truly impressive Embassy annex. Throw in the uber chic VIP lounge at Nuvo and the trendy Martinis at the Mandarin.



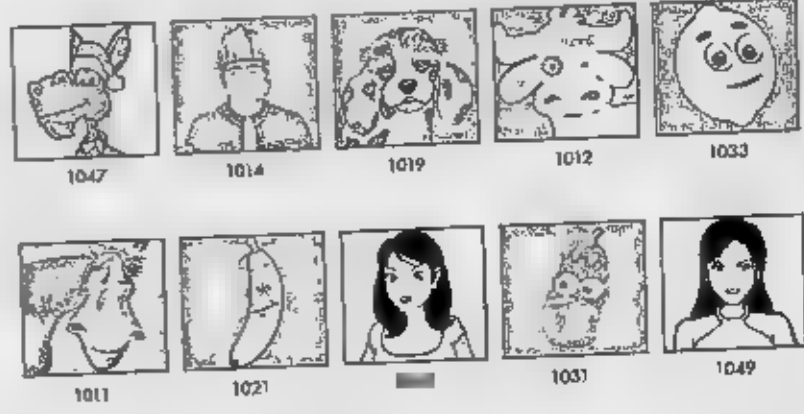
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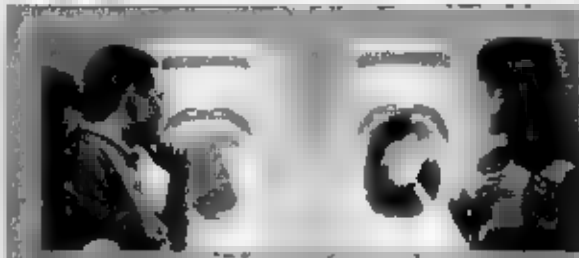
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# SATURDAY Special

Editor Nestor U. Torre • Assistant Editor Rito P. Asilo

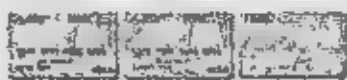
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NOW SHOWING

## Relevant themes in well-meaning but derivative MMFF entries

By Rito P. Asilo

**"Katas ng Saudi"/ "Sakal, Sakali, Saklolo"**

D: Jose Javier Reyes

S: Jinggoy Estrada and Lorna Tolentino; Judy Ann Santos and Ryan Agoncillo

IN JOSE JAVIER REYES' ENTRIES TO this year's Metro Manila Film Festival, Maverick Films' "Katas ng Saudi" and Star Cinema's "Sakal, Sakali, Saklolo," he tackles relevant issues that involve the modern Pinoy family.

In "Katas ng Saudi," Overseas Filipino Worker Oscar Dimaano (Jinggoy Estrada) comes home to his wife, Mercy (Lorna Tolentino), and their three kids (Shaina Magdayao, Arron Villaflores and Julian Estrada) after working for 10 years as an oil drilling company supervisor in Saudi Arabia. This time, he's considering staying home for good.

But, Oca's excitement turns into frustration and anxiety when he realizes how

little he knows of his kids—who treat him like a visiting stranger! In dire need of comfort, he turns to his loving mother (Vangie Labalan) and sister (Eugene Domingo) who, along with some very distant albeit needy relatives suddenly coming out of the woodwork, welcome him with open arms—until they start badgering him with their never-ending nagging for more financial dole-outs.

Of course, Oca reluctantly gives in—only to find out that the money Mercy's been saving up from his salary isn't nearly enough to finance the business venture he's been counting on if and when he decides to give up his stable job in Jeddah!

With depleting financial resources and his increasingly strained relations with his children, Oca is torn between staying put to keep his family together and making another lengthy sacrifice!

In "Sakal, Sakali, Saklolo," the sequel to last year's festival topgrosser, "Kasal, Kasali, Kasalo," Jed and Angie Valeriano (Ryan Agoncillo and Judy

Ann Santos) return for more domestic bliss and blunders.

The couple doesn't suffer the Dimaano family's economic difficulties—but they feel the financial pinch just the same. To help ease their tightening finances, Angie takes on a heavier work load as Jed grudgingly waits for his busy wife.

But, life is never easy, even in Star Cinema's fairy-tale land—especially if the protagonists' mothers-in-law are as colorful, feisty and competitive as local politician Belita (Gina Pareño) and well-meaning socialite Glendon (Gloria Diaz), who use their precocious, Visayan-speaking apo, Rafa (the adorable Timothy Lambert Chan), as a pawn in their nerve-racking and hilariously belly-aching power struggle! Jed and Angie once found their storybook happy ending, but do they get another shot at their happily-ever-after, the second time around?

Once again, Reyes demonstrates his flair for telling very personal stories that examine relevant issues involving the Filipino family without turning them into mush. The intelligent director fuses



TOLENTINO AND SANTOS. Topbill Jose Javier Reyes' festival flicks.

drama and humor to drive home contentious points—even when he discusses the economics of it, he doesn't turn his arguments into an academic dissertation or a mawkish dramatic exercise.

"Katas ng Saudi" is no doubt relevant and entertaining—but only up to a point. The film is not the superior film it's touted to be: It is bogged down by stodgy, awkward scenes that drag down its engaging narrative.

Estrada and Tolentino deliver fine performances, but it's hard to suspend disbelief that they're husband and wife. Estrada postures like his famous father

and his even more famous ninong, and this distracts from his performance.

Moreover, regardless of time and distance (or the film's attempt at humor), it's hard to believe that Oca doesn't know what his youngest son looks like. Surely, the World Wide Web has also invaded the wealthy kingdom in the Middle East, right?

On the other hand, "Sakal, Sakali, Saklolo" continues its predecessor's penchant for rollicking humor. Once again, Pareño displays her crowd-pleasing antics as she

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# Fil-Ams in Hollywood share thoughts on writers' strike

By Rica Arevalo

ON MY VISIT TO THE UNIVERSAL Studios last week, it was hard not to notice Hollywood's striking writers on the streets carrying placards in the picket line. I was determined to enjoy my Christmas vacation in Tinseltown, but the trip also allowed me to ask Filipinos working there for their thoughts about the situation.

Tanya Yuson, who used to work with Untel, is an executive for Millar Gough Ink. She coproduces and works with scriptwriters. She shares: "My company produces 'Smallville' for Warner Bros, though I deal more with the company's feature-film section that has a first-look deal with Walt Disney Studios. Disney pays for our overhead, and in return, they have the first right of refusal for our projects. We're currently setting up five projects with them and another one for Fox Atomic."

## Necessary step

What does she think of the strike? "It's a necessary step," she explains. "My bosses, Al Gough and Miles Millar, are A-list writers, as well. They did 'Spider-Man 3,' 'Lethal Weapon 4,' 'Shanghai Noon,' as well as the upcoming 'Mummy 3.' The writers should get a cut of Internet revenues."



**TROUBLE IN TINSELTOWN.** Writers demand their fair share of the revenue pie.

"Many members of the writers' guild live on a job-to-job basis—they will suffer if this strike drags on for a long time. We have had to put a lot of projects on hold because they are in dire need of rewrites or some polishing—and we can't do that until the strike is over!"

Gil Erese II is a desktop analyst at Warner Bros. He's based in LA, but if there are problems with WB's computers in New York or UK, he troubleshoots.

"I'm a MAC and PC specialist. Most writers use Mac. *Konti lang ang inayos ka ngayon* because of the strike," he discloses. He in-

formed us that his office even received a memo that if a non-union employee is seen joining the strike, he risks getting terminated.

## State of the art

Over at the University of Southern California, I met Mar Klepano, who was kind enough to show me around the university's state-of-the-art School of Cinematic Arts. George Lucas donated a whopping \$175 million for a new five-story building set to open in December next year. Mar is a production supervisor at USC's John C. Hench division of Animation and Digital Arts.

Elepano admitted that the strike did affect friends and colleagues in the industry. "My friends, who are union gaffers, have all stopped working, because their shows have been frozen. They recently staged a rally asking everybody to go back to work. But, there's no solution to the problem of greed. You just hope that a sense of fairness will eventually overcome the desire for more!"

## Celine Dion takes chances . . . From page F4

Ne-Yo, who wrote Beyoncé Knowles' hit song, "Irreplaceable" (which was recently declared the year's No. 1 top-selling single), contributes his composition, "I Got Nothin' Left."

But, if you're partial to Dion's beautifully rendered, poignant tunes like "The Colour of My Love," "Nature Boy" or her soul-stirring remake of Luther Vandross' "Dance With My Father," the hit-bound tracks, Linda Perry's "My Love" and Tim Christensen's "Right Next to the Right One," will no doubt whet your craving for intimate, adult-contemporary music and dreamy musings.

The 16-track lineup's other noteworthy songs: The high-adrenaline number, "Fade Away," the contemplative "Ain't Got Nothing Left," and the Hindi-Middle Eastern fusion, "Eyes on Me," which sounds exotic—but

not quite authentic. Perhaps a future collaboration with Lebanese-born, Oscar-winning composer Gabriel Yared ("The English Patient," "The

Talented Mr. Ripley") will do musical wonders—if the reenergized songstress decides to pursue this exciting musical trajectory!

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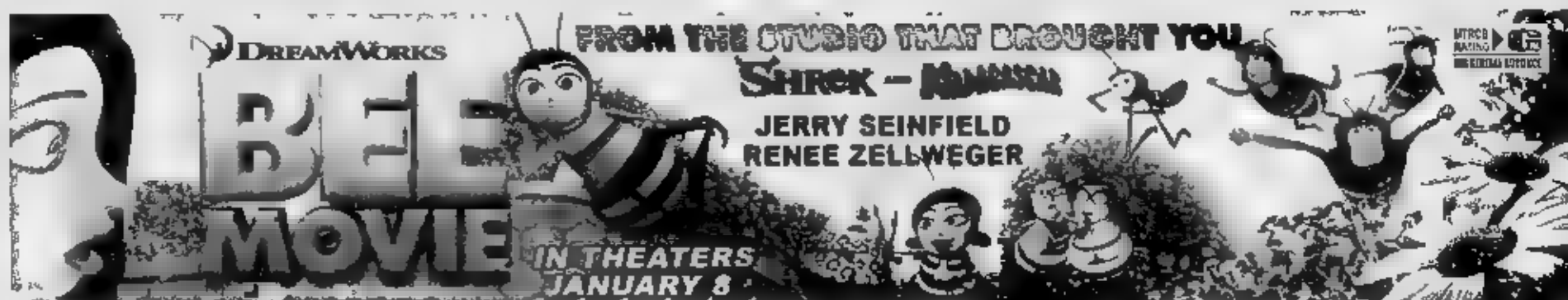
**DESPERADAS**

*all they need to love...  
and can those men give love?*

**Bahay Kubo**  
A Pinoy Mano Po!

DECEMBER 29, 2007 • 6:00 pm  
Glorietta Activity Center

Reserved seats for the first 200 moviegoers who will present their SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL 9, DESPERADAS, and BAHAY KUBO movie tickets purchased in any Ayala Malls Cinemas on December 29, 2007.



**Annum**

## Specially formulated for breastfeeding moms

Mothers are recommended to drink 2 glasses of Annum Lacta everyday to support their increased nutritional needs during breastfeeding.

ANMUM LACTA is specially formulated to help breastfeeding mothers meet their Recommended Energy and Nutrient Intake (RENI). A product of Fonterra Brands Philippines, ANMUM LACTA helps in maintaining the nutritional composition of breast milk while replenishing maternal stores during the post-natal period. ANMUM LACTA is a good source of Vitamins B1, B2, B3, B12, Folate, Calcium, Iron, and Vitamin A. It also contains Sialic Acid (SA) and Essential

Fatty Acids (EFA), precursors of DHA and AA, which are important nutrients for your baby's brain development.



## Why breastfeed immediately after birth?

by Dr. Raul Quillamor, FPOGS  
PRO, Perinatal Association of the Philippines (PAP)

Most hospitals practice a breastfeeding program wherein babies are latched on to the mother as soon as they are delivered and resuscitated. For most moms though, especially first-time mothers, this urgency is not clear, and often misunderstood. So why is immediate latching on imperative and how important is breastfeeding during the baby's first few minutes?

Studies have shown that immediate breastfeeding delivers physical, mental and emotional benefits for the mother and baby.

Mother's first milk contains colostrum, a yellowish liquid rich in antibodies that boosts baby's immune system and protects his intestines. Colostrum helps prevent cases of middle ear infections, stomach flu and pneumonia which are common in babies. It also protects them from allergies, as well as asthma and eczema.

Aside from providing nutritional gains for the baby, early breastfeeding also helps prepare mothers for a successful long-term breastfeeding experience by stimulating the nipples for consistent breast milk production. Sucking accelerates the flow of breast milk. So if a mother breastfeeds immediately after giving birth, the breast is stimulated and milk would come out.

The mother's body temperature keeps the baby warm, which relaxes and gives him comfort. And because the baby would definitely discover the mother's breast, he would begin to suckle. This would help him become accustomed to his new environment. Suckling is a familiar behavior for the baby, so it helps relieve the stress the baby underwent during delivery.

Aside from the nutritional benefits of early breastfeeding for the baby, it also contributes to the health of mothers. Suckling stimulates the release of oxytocin, which helps in the contraction of the uterus and aids in stopping post-partum bleeding. Also, since breastfeeding gives mothers the feeling of fulfillment, it contributes to her emotional development as well.

Early breastfeeding also helps the baby become familiar with the mother's body. After birth, the baby is in the optimal state of quiet alertness and this is the perfect time to discover his source of nourishment. To have the baby held by the mother will help him become comfortable with the mother's body.

It's amazing when you see a new born in her mother's arms; the instinct is very strong. Sometimes we don't even have to assist the baby; he finds the breast/nipple by himself. Babies find the source of nourishment by instinct.

Because it's the only way they can give their babies the best care and nourishment, mothers should emotionally and physically prepare for their first breastfeeding moment early on. A mother who intends to breastfeed must be in top physical health, and observe proper nutrition.



After giving birth, it's important for a mother to continue nourishing herself to get the nutrients she needs to breastfeed her child. And since it's not always easy to get the right amount of nutrients in one's daily diet, a specialized milk for breastfeeding mothers is needed. Rich with the essential nutrients breastfeeding mothers need, adding this supplement to a well-balanced diet helps mothers meet their Recommended Energy Nutrient Intake and produce nutrient-rich breast milk for their newly born babies.

This is why the Perinatal Association of the Philippines (PAP) continues to create programs that will help educate and encourage mothers to breastfeed immediately. Ultimately, we want to make them realize that the only way they can ensure their baby's holistic growth and development is by maintaining their own health and wellness. Only through proper nutrition will mothers be able to give their children the best nourishment, which is none other than breast milk, as early as possible. This will also help them achieve success with their breastfeeding experience.

YULETIDE STORY FOR YOUNG READERS

# The adoration of a mouse

By Ametta Suarez Taguchi

MANY YEARS AGO IN A VILLAGE called Bethlehem, there lived a tiny, brown mouse named Josephus. Unlike most mice, he wanted to make friends with other animals and with people. Sad to say, no matter how hard he tried to be friendly, the animals said, "Mice are not nice!"

"Josephus's fur is too dull," a pretty white rabbit said, twitching her nose.

"Josephus is full of fleas. Don't go near him," a mother goat warned her kids.

"His squeaky voice scares me," a sheep bawled to a cow.

"Oh? I think it's a funny voice," the cow moored back—even though she, too, had a funny voice.

## Obedient dog

"Mice are disobedient. I'd rather not play with Josephus," an obedient dog declared.

"You mice eat the grains in my master's granary!" a handsome camel said to Josephus.

"Don't worry, Came. I'm here to get rid of all mice," a huge gray cat meowed, chasing poor Josephus away.

As for people, they, too, did not like to befriend Josephus. No matter how regularly he took a bath in the river and brushed his teeth with a twig, people said Josephus was dirty and smelly. Even though Josephus was a very healthy mouse, people suspected he carried all sorts of diseases which made people sick.

Having no one to play with, Josephus amused himself by watching the activities in Bethlehem. This was a boring way to have fun, because everyday the activities were exactly the same: farming, fetching water, milking the goats, and shepherding the sheep.

But one night, something extraordinary happened in the vil-



ILLUSTRATION BY ALBERT TORRES

lage. A big star appeared in the sky! It had long bright tail that seemed to point at something.

As the villagers were wondering what it was that the star was pointing at, an angel appeared and announced "The King whose coming was foretold by prophets, is born. His name is Jesus. Follow the star. You will find him in a cave. Though dressed in rags and lying in a manger, he is a king. Adore him, for he rules heaven and earth!"

Everyone rushed to the cave at once. Because of the excitement and hurry, no one remembered to bring a gift, which was expected in an adoration visit.

At the cave, Josephus hid in a haystack so he would not be driven away. What was Jesus like, he wondered? He crept closer to the edge of the haystack to see the baby better,

but as he neared the edge, he tripped and fell to the ground!

All the animals and people in the cave gasped in shock, for it was not considered nice for creatures like cockroaches, snakes, and mice to be in the presence of a king!

The huge gray cat was about to shoo Josephus away when the father of Jesus shouted, "Stop!" Jesus was stretching his tiny arms toward Josephus! "Mouse," the father of Jesus said, "Jesus wants you to come closer to him."

## Friendly and bright

Shyly, Josephus climbed on the manger and bowed to Baby Jesus in adoration. He said in a whispering voice, "Thank you, your highness, for allowing this lowly mouse to adore you." Jesus smiled at Josephus with a smile that was so friendly and

bright, it lit up the dark cave!

Seeing this, the obedient dog, who was also very observant and wise, said: "I think the newborn king like Josephus. I think it would please him very much if we smiled and started being nice to him. This could be our adoration gift!"

"That's an excellent idea!" all the visitors exclaimed. So they smiled at Josephus—and when Josephus smiled back, the handsome camel remarked, "You know, if you take a very good look at Josephus, you'd see that though he is as mousey as any mouse can be, he is charming in his own special way!"

Everyone, including the huge gray cat, took a good look at Josephus and patted him on the head. This made Jesus's smile bigger and brighter, for being nice to the mouse was the adoration gift He wanted most to receive!

## Celine Dion takes chances in latest album

By Rito P. Asilo

CELINE DION IS no stranger to risk taking, but it's been awhile since she last veered away from over-the-top vocal theatrics and the lush sentimentality of her adult contemporary pop sound. Vocal restraint and technical virtuosity may have usually earned her plaudits from music critics, but her bravura singing style is the five-octave diva's main claim to fame.

Fact is, Dion has been taking chances since she was 12 years old. She composed and recorded a song ("It Was Only a Dream") with her mother and brother, then she sent a demo to talent manager, René Angélil—who was moved to tears upon hearing Dion's voice.

## Mortgage

Angélil then decided to make the talented teenager a star by taking a mortgage on his house to raise funds for Celine's first record, "La Voix Du Bon Dieu (The Voice of God)." The risk paid off beautifully. Later, the duo's relationship blossomed from professional to romantic. Dion eventually married her manager—who's 26 years her senior!—in 1994.

The youngest of 14 children, Dion hurdled one challenge after another, both professional and personal. She conquered the 1982 Yamaha World Popular Song Festival and the 1988 Eurovision

## DION. No stranger to risk-taking.

Song Contest long before she topped the Billboard charts with hits like "Because You Loved Me," "Beauty and the Beast" and "My Heart Will Go On." But, her relationship with critics soured as she became more popular.

On her eighth English-language studio album, "Taking Chances"—Dion's first since 2003's "One Heart"—she continues to showcase her golden pipes in earnestly sung numbers like "Song for You," but she also effectively revisits her soft rock roots.

The new track and the spanking "Surprise, Surprise" are more Natalie Imbruglia and Tori Amos than classic Dion.

## Sentimentality

The singer's slick, new sound has something for everyone—even for her worst critics. If you prefer the dripping sentimentality of "The Power of Love" and "All By Myself," Dion's cover of Heart's power ballad, "Alone" won't disappoint.

CELINE, 33



## AT THE CINEMAS

IFX

Reserve your tickets by texting: SURESEATS 683 or SURESEATS 64 to 2833 (Globe) or 211 (Smart) or log on to [www.sureseats.com](http://www.sureseats.com) for web reservations. Movie schedules may change without prior notice. For verification, please call 729-7777

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GLORIETTA 4	1 RESIKLO	2 ENTENG KABISOTE 4	3 SAKAL SAKALI SAKLOLO	4 KATAS NG SAUDI
GREENBELT 1	1 ENTENG KABISOTE 4	2 RESIKLO	3 KATAS NG SAUDI	4 SAKAL SAKALI SAKLOLO
GREENBELT 3	1 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 9	2 BAHAY KUBO	3 KATAS NG SAUDI	4 SAKAL SAKALI SAKLOLO
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 9	2 BAHAY KUBO	3 SAKAL SAKALI SAKLOLO	4 ENTENG KABISOTE 4
AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 BAHAY KUBO	2 SAKAL SAKALI SAKLOLO	3 ENTENG KABISOTE 4	4 RESIKLO
MARKET! MARKET!	1 BAHAY KUBO	2 SAKAL SAKALI SAKLOLO	3 ENTENG KABISOTE 4	4 RESIKLO
TRINOMA	1 RESIKLO	2 ENTENG KABISOTE 4	3 SAKAL SAKALI SAKLOLO	4 KATAS NG SAUDI
	5 BAHAY KUBO	6 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 9	7 ENTENG KABISOTE 4	

## AT THE MALLS

CONCIERGE HOTLINE NUMBERS:

Glorietta 752 7272, Greenbelt 757 4953 to 54, Alabang Town Center 842 2782, 772 1860, Ayala Center Cebu (842) 231 5342 loc. 324, Market! Market! 886 7519, TriNoma 901 3008

Ayala

<p>Regal Extravaganza 2007 feat. the stars of "Shake Rattle &amp; Roll 9", "Bahay Kubo" &amp; "Desperados". Reserved seats for the first 200 moviegoers who will present "Shake Rattle &amp; Roll 9", "Bahay Kubo" &amp; "Desperados" movie tickets. December 29, 2007, 6:00pm, Activity Center</p>	<p>Christmas Gift Box Promo: Get a FREE gift box for a minimum purchase of P3,000 at any Greenbelt establishment. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. A2-490, Series of 2007, December 1 to 31</p>
<p>Grand Fireworks Display: December 30, 6:50pm, Town Plaza</p>	<p>FREE Christmas Gift Bag for every P500 worth of purchase. See leaflets for details. Per DTI-Cebu Permit No. 584, Series of 2007, December 1 to 31</p>
<p>FREE Christmas Gift Bag for every P600 worth of purchase. See leaflets for details. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. A2-606, Series of 2007, December 1 to 31</p>	<p>Resortlife Philippines presents TUESDAYS WITH MORRIE. December 24 to 31, 2007. For inquiries, please call 842 8779</p>
<p>WATER: THE MEDIUM by Juernal Bana. November 24 to January 13, 2008. Ground Floor Gallery. For more info, pls. call 771-7 917 to 21 loc. 14 or email <a href="mailto:museum_inquiry@ayalamuseum.org">museum_inquiry@ayalamuseum.org</a></p>	<p>Taylor Hicks Live! December 26, 7pm; Activity Center</p>
<p>FREE Christmas Gift Bag for every P500 worth of purchase. See leaflets for details. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. A3-938, Series of 2007, December 1 to 31</p>	

**Glorietta 4 HOLIDAY CINEMA TREATS**

Watch any movie at Glorietta 4 Cinemas and enjoy exciting treats from participating Glorietta 4 food establishments!

Offer may not be availed in conjunction with other promotions. Promo Period: November 14 to December 31, 2007. Ayala Malls Cinemas... Beyond Movies! Per DTI-NCR Permit No. A2-503, Series of 2007. See posters for more details.

**Christmas at TriNoma**

TriNoma Concierge Hotline: 901-3000

**Simbang Gabi**  
Starting December 15 at 6 PM  
4th Level TriNoma Park

**Wrapping Corner**  
Arrival of wrapping services by A Perfect Creation at discounted prices.  
3rd Level Concierge near Main Entrance

**Fit for the Holidays**  
Group Exercises by Fitness First Metamorphosis  
Mon/Wed/Fri of December  
at 10:30AM and 6 PM  
3rd Level TriNoma Park

**Christmas Moments**  
A Multimedia Workshop  
December 13-15 (3 to 5 PM)  
3rd Level TriNoma



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WINFREY. Spirituality and sense of self.

LOS ANGELES—WE CONTINUE with our appreciation of the celebrities who kept us awake in the press cons we attended in 2007

## Oprah Winfrey

The talk show queen is a master at interviews. When asked, "If you had only one more day to live, what would you do?" Oprah answered, "I have thought about that every day since 9/11. Every morning, when I'm putting on my shoes or doing the simplest things, I think about the victims of 9/11, who did the same thing. They got dressed, brushed their teeth, showered and did all the ordinary things that we do. None of them came

## ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD

Ruben V. Nepales



home. That's part of my daily meditation. I ask myself: Is this the way I'd like to spend my last day?"

How does she keep her cool? She replied: "By having spiritual roots—knowing the essence of who you are, so you don't allow the world and the words, thoughts and perceptions of the world to define who you are. I know who I am, regardless of

what's written or said about me. I'm rooted in my own spirituality and my sense of self."

US Democratic presidential contender Barack Obama's top supporter believes that racism can be cured—"but I don't think we can do it in our lifetime. It's an ongoing process for people to open their hearts and recognize that we're more alike than different. When you have people in power who have not been exposed to diversity, it's very easy for them to feel superior to others."

## Shakira

Surprise! There's more to the hip-swiveling pop star than her long curly

locks and powerful voice. Shakira's answers to our questions were spontaneous, yet they were well-composed. She was passionate and articulate about her philanthropy, especially her programs to help children in need.



SHAKIRA. Advocacy for needy children.

"We should all be concerned about MOST/63



Bigatin ang laman. Ligo Corned Beef.

**Wise men shop here**



Searching for that perfect gift for that special someone? Take a ride to GSC where everything from jewelry to furniture to unique home decors are at bargain prices! Great holiday finds are endless in over 2000 stalls sa Greenhills Christmas Bazaar! at pwede pang mag shop 'til sawa sa Greenhills Night Market! This Christmas, all roads lead to Greenhills Shopping Center.

**GREENHILLS**

any time January 06, 2008

What happens if you get lost in a forest and find yourself turning into an ogre-anthro?

Or if you just got horny and you saw your family being eaten alive by a blood hungry Christmas Tree!

Or better yet: if you can't wake up on Christmas Day because of lingsangsang?

"Shake, Rattle and Roll 9" features three nerve-shattering stories with only one mission: to make the audience scream to their lungs!

**Starring**  
 Dennis Trillo, John Prats,  
 Roxanne Galloza, Katrina Halili,  
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**Directed by**  
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- 7 RESIKLO
- 8 SAKAL, SAKALI, SAKOLO
- 9 ENTENG KABISOTE 4
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- 11 KATAS NG SAUDI
- 12 SAKAL, SAKALI SAKOLO

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14. BAKA' SAKAL SAKLOU

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9KATAS NG SAUDI  
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WTRCB ► PG-13 | Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult.

**OPENS JANUARY 8**

**GET ENCHANTED!**



**Her Seven Dorks**

A black and white movie poster for the film "Mean Girls". The poster features a collage of images: a large portrait of Amanda Bynes on the left, a smaller portrait of Sara Paxton in the upper center, a portrait of Sydney White in the upper right, and a portrait of a boy from "The Seven Dorks" inside a heart-shaped frame at the bottom center. The title "Mean Girls" is written in a large, stylized font at the top. Below the images, the names of the main cast members are listed: "Amanda Bynes Sara Paxton Sydney White" and "...and The Seven Dorks." At the very bottom, there is a small line of text: "From the creators of Mean Girls and The Hot Chick" and a "PG-13" rating.

**Mean Girls**

Amanda Bynes Sara Paxton  
 Sydney White  
 ...and The Seven Dorks.

From the creators of Mean Girls and The Hot Chick  
 PG-13

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3-3 KATAS NG SAUDI  
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<b>SAKAL, SAKALI, SAKOLOLO</b> 12:00   1:00   2:15   3:15   4:30 5:30   6:45   7:45   9:00   10:00	+	<b>ENTENG KABISOTE 4</b> 12:00   12:40   1:20   2:10 2:50   3:30   4:20   5:00 5:40   6:30   7:10   7:50 8:40   9:20   10:00	<b>RESIKLO</b> 12:40   3:00 5:10   7:20   9:30

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# Most fascinating interviews. . . From page G1

the environment, but there are other issues that need immediate attention.

"Half of the world's population lives on \$1 a day. Sixty million kids are out of school, so I have seriously taken my commitment to improve children's education around the world, especially in developing countries where my foundation, Pies Descalzos (Bare Feet), has been working to build schools and provide a nutrition program.

She continued, "I'm also involved in ALAS (America Latina en Accion Solidaria), a nonprofit organization designed to help children in vulnerable places. We nurture kids and help mothers through pregnancy."

When asked if she missed out on a lot of things in her rush to do so much at such an early age, she revealed that she took a course at UCLA (University of California, Los Angeles): "These past months, I have been taking a break from everything that I've been doing nonstop for the past 15 years. I went back to school—which was what I've always wanted to do!"

"I've had a happy childhood—and a complete life. But, I took a sabbatical (laughter). I studied the history of western civilization, which was one of my hidden passions. Now, I hang out with friends and do things I don't get to do when I'm on the road. The break has been so therapeutic! I'm sure this experience will serve as my inspiration for my next album."

## Daniel Day Lewis

The frontrunner in this year's Best Actor race for his terrific performance in "There Will Be Blood" should grace us with more film appearances, but he can be just as happy relaxing in Wicklow, Ireland.

He told us: "I'm never bored. I spend long periods of time doing things that might be extremely boring for other people. I live in Wicklow Hills, where months can go by, and I wouldn't even be aware of the pages turning by just the pleasure of looking at the landscape."

He denied a curious item printed in The New York Times Magazine's profile on him—that "he has been known to spend an hour studying the construction and design of shoes" at the Manolo Blahnik store in New York. "I never did. Other people spoke on my behalf about it. It was rumored that I was a shoemaker in Florence. I'm utterly bewildered by the reference to Manolo Blahnik. If I were to study the construction of shoes, much as I admire Blahnik's shoes, that store would not be the place that I'd go to study."

## Julian Schnabel

The American painter-turned-director, whose "The Diving Bell and the Butterfly" I recommend as the film to see if you had time to watch one movie this season, has come up with a deeply affecting masterpiece.

"Diving Bell" is an ode to his beloved old man. "My father lived with me until he was 92 years old. I took a nap with him every day in the summer in Montauk, New York. I had a very difficult time when he died. We were always together. When he died, everybody—from Jack Nicholson and Johnny Depp to Sean Penn—read the text that my father left me, which was amazing! He only had a third grade education."

## Hugh Grant

He must be the world's wittiest "miserable" man. Grant came up with his own term—a "miserablist." In an amusing discourse, he claimed to have been miserable since the '90s, because of the pressure to remain successful.

Leave it to a Brit to talk about something as mundane as training to sing, dance and play the piano for the movie, "Music and Lyrics," and still sound amusing: "I had tons of piano lessons—and that's actually gratifying. It's one of those few things in life where there's a direct correlation between the amount of work I put in and the progress I make. It's weird—I practice and practice, and it's miserable. I can't do it!"

"Singing was just a question of having fantastic record producers around me who were very clever with the computer. I sing like a hound, but by the time I finished, the result was unbelievable! They can tune me, put an echo, and make my voice richer. Knowing that as a safety net, I gradually got more and more confident."

"Dancing was really hell, because you either have it or you don't. I emphatically don't! They got this brilliant choreographer, who does all those top girls, Britney (Spears) and Christina (Aguilera) and everyone. He (Dan Karaty) and I stood facing each other in a cold dance studio."

"Dan said, 'Okay, I'm going to put the music on and just express yourself.' He put the music on—and I just stood still for half an hour (laughter)! In the end, I say this jokingly, but it's actually true, I had to resort to alcohol and drugs to get me through all that! But, who dances when they're not drunk? No one!"

## Sacha Baron Cohen

Cohen is another Brit who is absolutely hilarious in interviews. "I'm sorry. His balls were caught in the elevator so I'm here, instead." —That's how the actor replied when asked why he didn't attend the press con as Signor Pirelli in the film adaptation of Stephen Sondheim's "Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street."



GRANT. Amusing.



COHEN. Hilarious.



SCHNABEL. Affecting film.



LEWIS. Terrific performance.

Sacha makes the most of his small part in the movie. He plays the flamboyant Italian barber in anatomically graphic spandex pants. He quipped, "I prefer to be in character, but unfortunately, getting into that character would have required help from a number of people." He spoke as his popular character, Borat—costume and all.

Since Johnny Depp's title character is driven by revenge, Sacha was asked if he was the type who liked to get even. "Not really," he replied. "Last year, I was sued (for 'Borat') by about 3,000 people (laughter). Everyone wanted to get even with me, but their letters were unusual. I was informed by lawyers that I was about to be sued by someone for \$100,000. Then, the letter said at the end, 'ES. I loved the movie. Can you sign a poster for my son, Jeremy?'"

He admitted to being sad about retiring Borat and Ali G, since they have become so popular, and he can't pose as those characters anymore. "You learn to love the characters, especially since you play them for a long time," he disclosed. "When I was doing Ali G or Borat, sometimes I would be in character for 14 hours a day. You become the character, so admitting that you're never going to play it again is quite a sad thing."

Does he enjoy showing off? First, there was his bathing suit scene in "Borat." Now, he sings in tight spandex pants in "Sweeney Todd." He dished, "A lot of actors put on weight for a role. I put on three inches for this one (laughter). I got excited during some scenes (laughter). Having Johnny Depp around was clearly inspirational."

"I worked with this brilliant costume designer, Colleen Atwood, and we were going through what the character should look like. We contemplated having him as a really fat guy. Then, we moved toward having him more as a toreador. If you notice, bullfighters have very tight spandex trousers."

## George Clooney

The world knows that beneath the joking exterior and the two-time "Sexiest Man Alive" tag, George Clooney is active in humanitarian causes, especially in raising awareness for the violence in Darfur, Sudan. He has helped raise millions of dollars for the relief of its refugees.

Here's George thoughts on actors as political and social advocates: "We go through periods when actors are vocal about issues, and periods when actors are made to look stupid. They probably helped perpetuate that notion by being stupid sometimes."

"Problem is, if you want to speak up about issues now, you have to know more about Darfur than Bill O'Reilly (the conservative TV personality), so that, if he wants to bring on a fight, you can sit him down and say, 'Let's talk about that!' You have to be well informed, because people will try to destroy your credibility!"

CLOONEY. Humanitarian causes.

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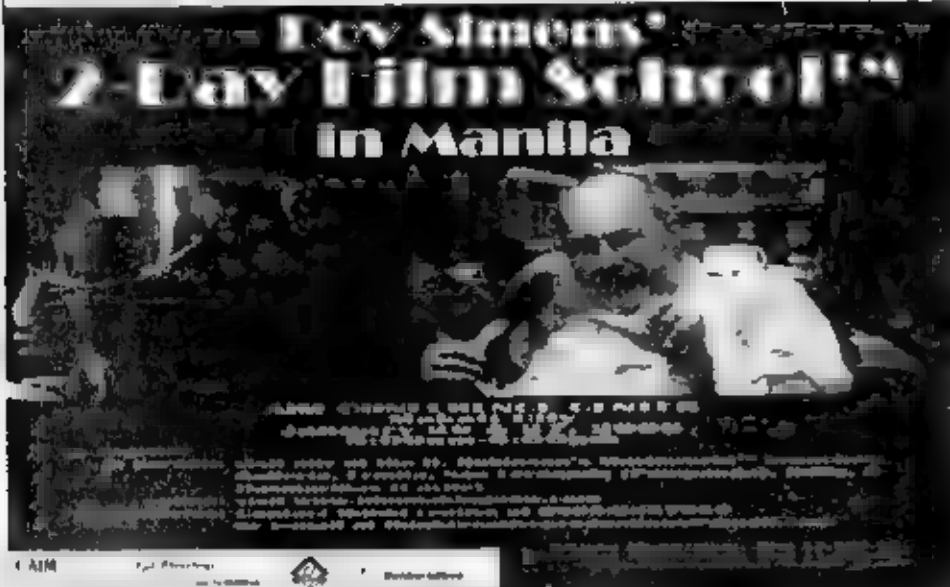


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1 SAKAL SAKALI SAKLOLO • THX 12:40 2:30 4:50 7:10 9:30	6 SHAKE RATTLE and ROLL 9 11:00 1:45 4:30 7:15 10:00
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## METRO EAST

1 SHAKE RATTLE and ROLL 9 11:00 1:30 4:00 6:30 9:00	6 ENTENG KABISOTE 4 11:00 1:30 4:00 6:30 9:00
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4 RESIKLO 11:05 1:35 4:05 6:35 9:05	8 ENTENG KABISOTE 4 1:30 4:00 6:30 9:00

## NOVALICHES

1 RESIKLO	5 SAKAL SAKALI SAKLOLO
2 SAKAL SAKALI SAKLOLO	6 ENTENG KABISOTE 4
3 BAHAY KUBO	7 SHAKE RATTLE and ROLL 9
4 KATAS ng SAUDI	8 ENTENG KABISOTE 4

## PIONEER

1 SHAKE RATTLE and ROLL 9	3 KATAS ng SAUDI
2 BAHAY KUBO	4 RESIKLO

## STAR ROSA

1 RESIKLO	1 ENTENG KABISOTE 4
2 BAHAY KUBO	2 SAKAL SAKALI SAKLOLO
3 SAKAL SAKALI SAKLOLO	3 BAHAY KUBO
4 SHAKE RATTLE and ROLL 9	4 SHAKE RATTLE and ROLL 9
5 ENTENG KABISOTE 4	5 RESIKLO

## DASMARINAS

1 RESIKLO	1 RESIKLO
2 SAKAL SAKALI SAKLOLO	2 SHAKE RATTLE and ROLL 9
3 SHAKE RATTLE and ROLL 9	3 BAHAY KUBO
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 4	4 KATAS ng SAUDI
5 SAKAL SAKALI SAKLOLO	5 SAKAL SAKALI SAKLOLO
6 BAHAY KUBO	6 ENTENG KABISOTE 4

## ANGELES

1 RESIKLO	1 RESIKLO
2 SAKAL SAKALI SAKLOLO	2 ENTENG KABISOTE 4
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 4	3 SHAKE RATTLE and ROLL 9
4 SHAKE RATTLE and ROLL 9	

## STAR MILLS

1 SHAKE RATTLE and ROLL 9	4 SAKAL SAKALI SAKLOLO
2 BAHAY KUBO	5 RESIKLO
3 KATAS ng SAUDI	6 ENTENG KABISOTE 4

## BAGUIO

1 BAHAY KUBO	1 RESIKLO
2 SAKAL SAKALI SAKLOLO	2 SHAKE RATTLE and ROLL 9
3 RESIKLO	3 BAHAY KUBO
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 4	4 KATAS ng SAUDI
5 KATAS ng SAUDI	5 SAKAL SAKALI SAKLOLO
6 SHAKE RATTLE and ROLL 9	6 ENTENG KABISOTE 4

## ILOILO

1 RESIKLO	1 RESIKLO
2 SHAKE RATTLE and ROLL 9	2 ENTENG KABISOTE 4
3 BAHAY KUBO	3 SHAKE RATTLE and ROLL 9
4 KATAS ng SAUDI	

## STAR MILLS

1 SHAKE RATTLE and ROLL 9	4 SAKAL SAKALI SAKLOLO
2 BAHAY KUBO	5 RESIKLO
3 KATAS ng SAUDI	6 ENTENG KABISOTE 4

## STAR MILLS

1 SHAKE RATTLE and ROLL 9	4 SAKAL SAKALI SAKLOLO
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# New Year's resolutions for celebrities

By Nestor U. Torre

AS ASSORTED LUMINARIES strutted their stuff in 2007, they showed both their plus and negative points, to the appreciation or irritation of the public. What should they do to boost their careers in the brand-new year coming up? Simple: Keep following their good instincts—and resolve never to repeat their mistakes or reveal their Achilles' heels, by way of some New Year's resolutions:

Starting off generally, stars and starlets with flagging careers shouldn't try to energize them by concocting rivalries, scandals and other spicy fakes, which they promptly unload on their gullible public on TV and in the tabloids.

### Less gullible

Trouble is the play's returns are definitely diminishing, because the public has become less gullible and is in fact now cynical and jaded.

Outstanding actors who haven't been seen on the big screen for years should make it a point to star in at least one film in 2008. Especially pegging Vilma Santos and Nora Aunor!

Trying-hard starlets shouldn't create rivalries or engage in cat-fights with each other over the silly issue of who among them deserves to be hailed as The Sexiest Filipino of the Year. The issue is silly, because truth to tell, none of its most avid aspirants deserve the title!

Some television newscasters should strive hard to arrive at a more realistic appreciation of their talent and accept the fact that, most of the time, they're simply reading the news text on events that other people have covered, researched on



SANTOS AND AUNOR (RIGHT). Should each star in a new film in 2008.

and written. So, why look and act like veritable superstars of the news and public affairs firmament?

Speaking of television, our TV channels should make it a point to start and end their programs on time, so viewers can more reasonably plan their lives. This, too, is a part of public service.

And TV channels that chronically exceed commercial load limits per hour should know that they can be penalized for their many infractions. Beyond "punishment," they should realize that they're exploiting the very same viewers they profess to love so much!

### Major reforms

Finally, show biz groups that are purveyors of dubious or tainted awards should resolve to institute major reforms in their selection process, before the public loses respect for and even interest in the "honors" they so dishonorably hand out.

On the individual level, these New Year's resolutions urgently need to be made by the celebrities concerned:



Manny Pacquiao: Don't run for public office, steer clear of acting and singing, and concentrate on what you do best: Boxing.

Bong Revilla and Edu Manzano: Stop washing each other's official linen in public, because it detracts from the good reputation of the laundry—er, the OMB.

### Comeback movie

Sharon Cuneta: Don't make that comeback movie until you've really slimmed down. You have lost quite a lot of weight, but please remember that the movie screen has a naughty penchant for adding 10 percent more girth to stars' frames, so more dieting is in order before your new movie's director shouts, "Action!"

KC Concepcion: After all the glitz and gloss that attended your return from your college studies in France, show biz fans are eager to see you on the movie screen, so do resolve to make your young-adult film debut in 2008.

Angel Locsin: Your move from GMA-7 to ABS-CBN was such a major heart-wrencher that you should move heaven and earth to make sure that your first ABS-CBN project, the "Lobo" teleserye with Piolo Pascual, turns out to be a rip-roaring success. Anything less than that would be decidedly—anticlimactic!

## Mother Ignacia's legacy continues in eco farm

MAA, DAVAO—MOTHER Ignacia del Espiritu Santo, a *mestiza* from Binondo, founded the congregation of the RVM sisters in 1684. She returned to our Father's warm embrace on Sept. 10, 1748.

The works of Mother Ignacia have since reached not just the Philippine countryside, but also the United States, Canada, Samoa, Indonesia, Ghana, Italy, Pakistan, Islamabad and Taiwan.

The value of service is ingrained in the RVM sisters' lives. It involves a deep sense of responsibility, commitment, devotion and obedience. They adhere to God's will by surrendering theirs.

### Volunteer

Upon the invitation of Juris Soliman, a volunteer at the RVM Healing Center in Novaliches, Rosan Cruz and I visited the Mother Ignacia Spirituality Eco Farm in Maa, Davao City, which uses the Sloping Agricultural Land Technology (SALT), in which Rensoni and Flemingia seeds are planted to prevent soil

The organic farm sits on a contoured hill with a beautiful view of Mt. Apo. It is home to fruit-bearing trees.

Mother Ignacia's mother, Jeronima, was also her mentor. At age 12, she is shown working in a

textile store. When she turned 21, she faced the dilemma of being a Chinese-Filipino who was bound by her parents—and tradition—to a parent-approved, pre-arranged marriage. Happily, Ignacia chose to serve God, instead!

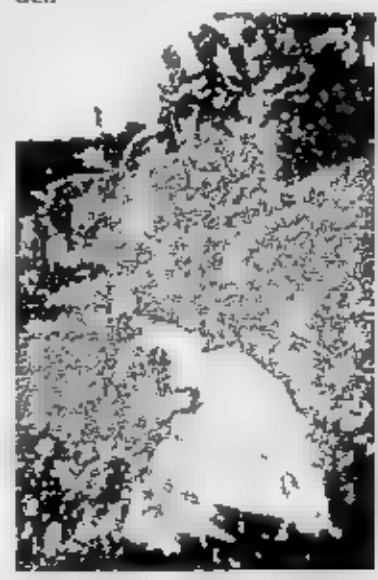
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Mandy Navasero

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THE RVM Sisters' farm (above and below) in Davao vivifies the congregation's sense of responsibility, commitment, devotion and obedience.

It's hard to match my encounter with Sister Berne, head of the RVM sisters in Mindanao, and Sister Angie Pascual—because it was, more than anything, a spiritual journey. Text 0919 496-8216, call (582) 246-9812, or drop by Brgy. Langub, Maa, Davao City. Their main office is located at the RVM Provincial House, 536 Mangga road, Juna subd., Matina, Davao City.

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## Most fascinating interviews . . .

From page G3

The actor also shared his thoughts about the pitfalls of Hollywood, which is known for its liberal views, and for endorsing political candidates: "It's dangerous to support a candidate," he stated. "I couldn't support my father when he ran for Congress, because it was like Hollywood versus the heartland."

"You pick things that are apolitical—like Darfur. There's no right or left on that issue—only right or wrong! You have to find ways not to alienate people and give even the worst people a way out."

He clarified, "I like my country. But, we still envision ourselves passing out stockings and choco-

lates in World War II, and rolling into France to liberate it. But, we're starting to understand that there's another world

there—not just a country try!"

### Michael Moore

The award-winning filmmaker's much-awaited new documentary, "Sicko," earned hearty applause during its press screening at this



MOORE. No to greed.

year's Cannes film fest. At the press con afterward, we asked why the controversial director chose to enter the film out of competition.

Moore replied that, in the spirit of the film, which questions why the US couldn't implement universal health coverage for Americans, he didn't want to adopt the "American attitude of more, more, more!" He explained that since he won a Palme d'Or in 2004 for "Fahrenheit 9/11," he did not want to be greedy!

E-mail rvnepales5585@yahoo.com, and read his blog, "The Nepales Report," on [www.inquiverbloggers.net/nepalesreport](http://www.inquiverbloggers.net/nepalesreport).



# 'Minutes to Midnight' marks turning point for Linkin Park

By Noelani Torre

RAP-METAL MAY BE ON ITS way out, but Linkin Park isn't. At least, that's what the group's most recent album, "Minutes to Midnight," proves. The boys' latest collection ostensibly marks a turning point in Linkin Park's approach to music-making.

You can read all about how different this new album is in the album's exhaustively detailed liner notes. They share, "The numbers already show it: Our other albums took three to six months to finish, this one took over 14! Our lyrics are usually written in about a month—this time, we spent over six. We usually write an average of 40 song ideas to finish an album, but this one generated over 100. We want to maintain the integrity of the band's personality by pushing our boundaries."

Judging by the amount of explaining the sextet does in the liner notes, trying to walk this fine line has obviously made them uneasy.

## Fan base

After all, if they push too much, they also risk pushing their angry, adolescent fan base away. If they didn't change at all, however, that would spell



RAP-METAL group wants to maintain its integrity by pushing its musical boundaries.



almost certain doom, since most people these days have fallen out of love with—or have simply outgrown—the rap metal genre.

There is no straight answer to the question of whether the new album succeeds in walking this fine line. Sometimes, it does; sometimes, it doesn't. But, despite all the time spent on making it, it doesn't evince a definite feel.

For all the thought that went into the making of the lineup's dozen songs, the overall feel is tentative—as though the almost-30-year-old boys of Linkin Park can't quite make up their minds about the direction they want to take.

The album doesn't represent a great leap into maturity nor a new direction—it sounds more like the hesitant baby steps of a band that doesn't know if what it sees ahead is the start of a new road or just a dead-end.

## Credibility

If there's anything working for them, it's the fact that Linkin Park has never been just a rap-metal band. Yes, Chester Bennington screams until he's red in the face, and Mike Shinoda raps (something he does very well in his Fort Minor solo project), but the group itself has always been about pop, rock and hook-laden melodic lines. Whatever changes they've

made can sound natural and plausible, and not too much like a last-ditch effort to regain credibility.

"Minutes to Midnight" is not the album that heralds the group's new sound, however. Sure enough, there are significant changes here—there's more crooning than screaming, for one, and hardly any rapping from Shinoda—but they sound too much like other emo-rockers.

Whether you like their past albums or not, the thing about Linkin Park's music is that it's always distinctive. Apart from three tracks in the lineup, however, the boys' new album is generally too homogeneous to be memorable!

# Celebs recall their favorite Christmas carols

By Behn Cervantes

I LOVE SINGING AND LISTENING to Christmas songs, especially the traditional carols that recall my early Yuletide hopes and youthful years.

They always enhance the season's mood and ambience because of their haunting appeal. To this day, I'm still moved by the lullaby, "Away in a Manger," my favorite carol—and the first one I ever learned! My mom taught it to me when I was just knee-high.

"Adeste Fideles" is a close second, and I'm still thrilled to hear "We Three Kings," because I also learned that old song as a kid. National Artist for Music Felipe de Leon's "Payapang Digidig" also rates high on my list of all-time favorites.

## Sentimentality

I am likewise affected by "Pasko Na, Santa Ko"—its contemporary music and lyrics contain the right dose of Christmas sentimentality and Pinoy feel. The vibrant and pulsating "Ang Pasko ay Sumapit" is also distinctly Pinoy.

In this country, Christmas commences in September and ends only after the first week of January. Those happy tunes bring to mind visions of puto bumbong, hamon, gifts, ninongs—and street urchins carousing at our gates.

When I asked Barbara Perez what her favorite carol was, she chose "Cantique de Noel," more popularly known as "O Holy Night." The elegant actress reasoned, "Its serenity is descriptive of that blessed night in Bethlehem—it focuses on the Holy Manger during that starry night."

## Problematic times

Writer Alya Honasan chose "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" because, as she explained, "It's not mindlessly festive, it talks about being happy and together despite the prob-

lematic times."

Talent manager Norma Japitana loves "The Christmas Song (Chestnuts Roasting on an Open Fire)" because the cheery holiday tune brings back romantic memories of a Christmas she spent with "someone special" many moons ago in New York.

"Silent Night" is special to theater actor-director Tony Mabesa because it was the first Christmas carol he learned. And, yes, it was also taught to him by his mother.

My friend, music educator Ditas Rivera-Silva, loves "Away in a Manger" because "the melody is simple and its lyrics bring out the real meaning of Christmas."

Tessie Ojeda Luz is still moved by the classical melody of "O Holy Night."

Ali Sotto answered my query sadly. She shared, "We lost our beloved Mike four Christmases ago. The joy of the season eludes me still. 'Til be Home for Christmas' is in my heart and mind a lot, along with a fervent prayer that he will be... even only in my dreams."

I said I hoped I didn't open old wounds. The singer-actress replied, "Tears are good." And she ended by saying, "A happy Christmas to you!"

## Top actress

Top actress Gina Alajar's favorite is "You're All I Want for Christmas," another song that juxtaposes Yuletide joy with romantic sadness. When I asked the multi-awarded actress why she was partial to the tune, she answered, "I love romantic songs!"

Cesar Montano and Sunshine Cruz have a sentimental attachment to "Adeste Fideles (O Come All Ye Faithful)" they sang the song to their eldest daughter, Angelina, when Cesar was filming "The Great Raid" in Australia, when the girl was merely a year old.

Whatever your favorite carol is, *Maligayang Pasko sa inyong lahat!*



PEREZ AND ALAJAR. Love "O Holy Night" and "You're All I Want for Christmas," respectively.

## SHANG CINEPLEX

1 BAHAY KUBO  
12:30, 3:30, 5:35, 8:20

2 KATAS NG SAUDI  
1:30, 4:00, 6:30, 9:00

3 SAKAL, SAKALI, SAKOLO  
12:30, 3:30, 5:35, 8:20

4 ENTENG KABISOTE 4  
1:30, 4:00, 6:30, 9:00

PREMIER THEATRE CLOSED

Movies and schedules are subject to change without prior notice.

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## City of Celebrations

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# SIDE A

December 28 8PM  
Eastwood Central Plaza

Laughter  
Eastwood City

## EASTWOOD CINEMAS

Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City  
E Rodriguez Jr. Ave. (C-5) Biscayan City

7568

687-6963  
GUARANTEED SEATS

SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 9  
1:55, 4:55, 7:55, 10:55

SAKAL, SAKALI, SAKOLO  
12:10, 2:50, 5:30, 8:10, 10:50  
PG-13

ENTENG KABISOTE 4  
12:55, 3:20, 5:45, 8:10, 10:30

RESIKLO  
2:05, 4:35, 7:05, 10:20

SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 9  
1:55, 4:55, 7:55, 10:55

SAKAL, SAKALI, SAKOLO  
12:10, 2:50, 5:30, 8:10, 10:50  
PG-13

ENTENG KABISOTE 4  
12:55, 3:20, 5:45, 8:10, 10:30

RESIKLO  
2:05, 4:35, 7:05, 10:20

## GREENHILLS CINEMAS

THEATRE-MALL  
NOW SHOWING

1 RESIKLO  
10:30, 12:50, 3:10, 5:30, 7:50, 10:10  
GP

2 ENTENG KABISOTE 4  
10:30, 12:50, 3:10, 5:30, 7:50, 10:10  
GP

# PROMENADE

3 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 9  
1:20, 2:10, 3:00, 4:10, 5:00, 6:10, 7:00, 8:10, 9:00  
GP

4 BAHAY KUBO  
1:40, 2:25, 3:10, 4:00, 4:45, 5:30, 6:15, 7:00, 7:45, 8:30, 9:15  
GP

5 SAKAL, SAKALI, SAKOLO  
1:00, 4:00, 4:20, 6:40, 9:40  
PG-13

KIDS PICKS & SCHEDULING THE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. PER CINEMA SCHEDULE. CALL 722-4496.

MUSIC MUSEUM  
December 28, 2007  
January 24, 2008  
at 8:15, 8:30, 8:45, 9:00, 9:15, 9:30, 9:45, 10:00, 10:15, 10:30, 10:45, 11:00, 11:15, 11:30, 11:45, 12:00, 12:15, 12:30, 12:45, 1:00, 1:15, 1:30, 1:45, 2:00, 2:15, 2:30, 2:45, 3:00, 3:15, 3:30, 3:45, 4:00, 4:15, 4:30, 4:45, 5:00, 5:15, 5:30, 5:45, 6:00, 6:15, 6:30, 6:45, 7:00, 7:15, 7:30, 7:45, 8:00, 8:15, 8:30, 8:45, 9:00, 9:15, 9:30, 9:45, 10:00, 10:15, 10:30, 10:45, 11:00, 11:15, 11:30, 11:45, 12:00, 12:15, 12:30, 12:45, 1:00, 1:15, 1:30, 1:45, 2:00, 2:15, 2:30, 2:45, 3:00, 3:15, 3:30, 3:45, 4:00, 4:15, 4:30, 4:45, 5:00, 5:15, 5:30, 5:45, 6:00, 6:15, 6:30, 6:45, 7:00, 7:15, 7:30, 7:45, 8:00, 8:15, 8:30, 8:45, 9:00, 9:15, 9:30, 9:45, 10:00, 10:15, 10:30, 10:45, 11:00, 11:15, 11:30, 11:45, 12:00, 12:15, 12:30, 12:45, 1:00, 1:15, 1:30, 1:45, 2:00, 2:15, 2:30, 2:45, 3:00, 3:15, 3:30, 3:45, 4:00, 4:15, 4:30, 4:45, 5:00, 5:15, 5:30, 5:45, 6:00, 6:15, 6:30, 6:45, 7:00, 7:15, 7:30, 7:45, 8:00, 8:15, 8:30, 8:45, 9:00, 9:15, 9:30, 9:45, 10:00, 10:15, 10:30, 10:45, 11:00, 11:15, 11:30, 11:45, 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# Ricky Davao prepares to play his most challenging role

By Nestor U. Torre

**ACE STAGE-TV-FILM ACTOR** Ricky Davao's recent performance in "Insiang" at the CCP won plaudits from viewers and reviewers, who hailed it as one of the year's best—if not the very best portrayal by a male thespian for 2007. It caps a long career of acting in some 80 outstanding stage productions.

Given such a distinguished and compelling body of work, it's therefore surprising to hear Ricky describe his next theatrical outing, the title role in Prime Foundation's staging of "Padre Pio ng Pietrelcina" next month, as "the most challenging in my career."

## Intensive rehearsals

As Ricky takes a break from his intensive rehearsals for the play on the life of the well-loved saint at producer Boots Anson-Roa's house, he explains his "intriguing" statement.

"Padre Pio is a challenging

character to portray on many levels: In the more 'human' dimension, he is larger than life, full of love for the many people he helps find their way back to God. Unlike some other 'holy' figures, he's *mong-tao*, not afraid to express himself in a direct way, not at all 'politically correct' in his statements, because he wants to help people confront their true selves and see themselves as God sees them.

## Complex character

"On the other hand—and this is what makes him a complex character—he's also capable of absolute priestly obedience, no matter how difficult it is.

"In the play, this comes to the fore when his stigmata and other spiritual charisms disturb some church officials so much that they cut off most of his contact with the outside world.

"Since he loves people so much, this is a severe test of his vow of priestly obedience—but he makes the supreme sacrifice,



DAVAO AND ANSON-ROA. Cast as son and mother in the religious play, "Padre Pio ng Pietrelcina."

at great cost to his personal happiness!

"Padre Pio's character becomes even more complex when you confront his intense and immense spiritual dimen-

sion, his sanctity, and the fact that he is one of only a few hundred Catholics in the history of the Church who have been recipients of the stigmata, the holy wounds of Christ.



ROA. Deeply devout follower of the charismatic saint.

"It definitely isn't easy to act out the key scenes in the play, in which he receives and suffers from the pain of his stigmata. As the actor playing him, I don't feel the pain, but I have to internalize it—and then externalize it so the audience can experience and understand it, as well.

"It's also challenging to depict Padre Pio's other spiritual 'charisms' or powers, because he was exceptionally blessed by God in the spiritual area—probably because he needed to be especially 'powerful' to help so many people through the more than 50 years of his life as priest and stigmatist.

"Playing a character who ages more than 50 years on-

stage is another tough challenge for any actor. Aside from the physical changes brought about by age, you have to also go through mental and emotional adjustments that some other plays don't require.

## Evangelizing dimension

"But, all of these challenges, I don't shy away from. Instead, I embrace them, because they motivate me to make full use of my abilities. And, it's all good, because our play has an evangelizing dimension and will help many more people get to know and feel inspired by Padre Pio.

"Boots and the Prime Foundation are bent on doing this, because Pete Roa was a devotee of Padre Pio, whose spiritual example helped him a lot in his struggle with his many illnesses before his death earlier this year."

"Padre Pio ng Pietrelcina" will have its first performance at Tiendesitas, Ortigas Center, on Jan. 16, 2008, Pete's birthday. Other playdates are on Jan. 18, 19, 25 and 26.

Aside from Ricky, the play's cast includes Boots Anson-Roa in very special roles, as well as some theater luminaries. Lighting design is by Martin Esteve. Call Josephine de Veyra at telephone no. 928-6816 or (925) 415-9224.

# NEVER HIDE

## Rockstar Model Search

Send your photo at [www.rockstar.com.ph](http://www.rockstar.com.ph)

There is a superstar in you. Look it, and live it. Be the next Rock-Star and see the life of a real star. Just send us a photo looking like Rockstar in you wearing an authentic Rock-Star costume today October 22, 2007 - January 22, 2008. This exciting contest will be used for various Rock-Star advertising materials for 2008. Plus, each winner will take home Rockstar prizes like Motorola RAZR V3, P 20,000.00 worth of grooming and cosmetic kit from Star Unions, Camp Digital 3000 3D, and a limited edition 24-hour gold-plated Rock-Star Aviator.

## 'Music & Memories' at Manila Hotel

JOSE MARI CHAN, WILLIE Nepomuceno and Carmen Soriano topbill "Music & Memories," a special concert to be staged at The Manila Hotel's Centennial Hall on Jan. 25, 2008. The show is a fundraiser for the Philippine-Chinese Charitable Association, which

## MONTAGE

runs the Chinese General Hospital and Medical Center, CGH College of Nursing and Liberal Arts, Home for the Aged, Chinese Cemetery, and Charity Clinic. Call 632-1155 or 721-4677.



## Bamboo Organ Festival

The International Bamboo Organ Festival will be held in Las Piñas City from Feb. 21 to 29, 2008. The opening concert on Feb. 21 will feature a Filipino mass, "Misa de Sales," discovered in Bacayon Church in Bohol and dated 1826.

"An Evening of Organ Music" follows on Feb. 22, featuring French organist, Ghislain Leroy. Feb. 23, the traditional outdoor pop performance, "Concert Under the Trees." Feb. 24, the Las Piñas Boys Choir in concert. Feb. 25, a repeat of the opening concert.

The festival celebrates the 150th birthday of Giacomo Puccini with performances of his *Messa di Gloria*, together with a double-organ concerto by Bach on Feb. 27 and 29. Call (632) 510-3639.

## Movies on TV

On HBO today at 9 a.m., "Pride and Prejudice." Tomorrow at 3 p.m., "Mission Impossible 3." Dec. 31 at 5 p.m., "Black Beauty." Jan. 1 at 5 p.m., "Talladega Nights." Jan. 2 at 3 p.m., "Steel Magnolias." Jan. 3 at 3 p.m., "Terms of Endearment." Jan. 4 at 5 p.m., "American Dreamz."

On Cinemax today at 7 p.m., "Gladiator." Tomorrow at 7 p.m., "Alfie." Dec. 31 at 3 p.m., "Montana Sky." Jan. 1 at 9 p.m., "Collateral." Jan. 2 at 3 p.m.,

NEPOMUCENO. Performs with Jose Mari Chan and Carmen Soriano in Jan. 25 fundraiser.

"Mackenna's Gold" Jan. 3 at 7 a.m., "Merrill's Marauders," Jan. 4 at 1 p.m., "Casino."

## 'I Am Legend' at Imax Theater

Warner Bros.' sci-fi thriller, "I Am Legend," starring Will Smith, will be shown at the Imax theater at SM Mall of Asia starting Jan. 8, 2008, simultaneous with the film's opening at conventional cinemas across the country. "I Am Legend," which recently opened in the US to a record-breaking \$77.4 million, will be digitally remastered for Imax screening.

Preceding each screening will be the six-minute prologue of the new Batman movie, "The Dark Knight," starring Christian Bale.

## Lav Diaz film fest

Watch Lav Diaz' films at the Mogwai Cinematheque, Marikina Shoe Expo, Cubao, Quezon City: Dec. 28, "Ebolusyon"; Dec. 29, "Heremias," and Dec. 30, "Engkanto." Screenings start at 1 p.m.

## 'Rose Parade' on Studio 23

Catch the "118th Annual Tournament of the Roses Parade" on Jan. 1, 8:30 p.m. on Studio 23. This year's theme is "Star Wars."



"I AM LEGEND." Will Smith topbills hit sci-fi thriller.

MTRCB PG-13 Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or guardian.

# WILL SMITH

## THE LAST MAN ON EARTH IS NOT ALONE

# I AM LEGEND

JANUARY 8

Walter WART CINEMA 200	
MOVIE SCHEDULES/TICKET PRICES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE	
MAKATI CINEMAS	FLORDEL CINEMAS
3000 EDSA (near New World Hotel, Makati) TEL: (84) 426-0161 or 622-4267	3000 EDSA (near New World Hotel, Makati) TEL: (84) 755-5121 or 622-4267
C1 RESIKLO	C1 ENTENG KABISOTE 4
C2 ENTENG KABISOTE 4	C2 SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 6
C3 SAKAL, SAKALI, SAKOLO	C3 SAKAL, SAKALI, SAKOLO
C4 KATAS NG SAUND	C4 KATAS NG SAUND
GAPAN CINEMAS	
3000 EDSA (near New World Hotel, Makati) TEL: (84) 426-0161 or 622-4267	3000 EDSA (near New World Hotel, Makati) TEL: (84) 426-0161 or 622-4267
C1 ENTENG KABISOTE 4	C1 ENTENG KABISOTE 4
C2 SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 6	C2 SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 6
C3 SAKAL, SAKALI, SAKOLO	C3 SAKAL, SAKALI, SAKOLO

POWER PLANT CINEMA		
TEL: (84) 14-0241		
RESIKLO G 1:00, 3:20, 5:40, 8:00, 10:20	ENTENG KABISOTE 4 G 12:50, 3:10, 5:30, 7:50, 10:10	SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL 6 G 11:40, 2:20, 5:00, 7:40, 10:20
BAHAY KUBO G 11:50, 2:30, 5:10, 7:50, 10:30	KATAS NG SAUND G 1:30, 3:40, 5:50, 8:00, 10:10	SAKAL SAKALI SAKOLO PG13 11:00, 1:10, 3:30, 5:50, 8:10, 10:30

MOVIES & SCHEDULES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE



# Samsung Mobile ready to dominate 2008

SAMSUNG, A GLOBAL LEADER IN DIGITAL technology, rings in the New Year with a bang. Optimizing both style and technology, Samsung will present its latest cellular phones that are sure to fit in with the tech-savvy lifestyle as they hit the Philippine market on the first quarter of 2008. Keeping ahead of the competition once again, Samsung brings together sleek contemporary designs with cutting-edge technology even collaborating with another global brand, this time in the field of design and luxury goods.

For those who want their mobile phones to be more than just phones, the Samsung G800 is the phone to have as its camera functions and capabilities make it the photographers' camera phone of choice. Its multiple features, contained in a slim casing with metal finish, are comparable to that of usual digital cameras. Image Stabilizer for clear, crisp photos even for those with amateur photographic skills. Red-Eye Reduction and Face Detection to make the best of portrait and people shots. ISO Options to adjust to various lighting conditions, and the Xenon Flash and Wide Dynamic Range Optimization to capture details even in shadowy or backlit locations. There are also the Advanced Video Editor and Mobile Blogging to bring out the auteur in every mobile phone user and to allow them to share their masterpieces with the rest of the world via the internet. The G800 also features iCEpower®

Technology by Bang & Olufsen for optimum music listening, along with its MP3 player and FM radio. Its Bluetooth v. 2.0 connectivity and Yahoo! and Google search features ensure that users stay connected and updated. With up to 20 hours in off-line mode, people can have multimedia enjoyment through the G800 without having to connect to the network—perfect for

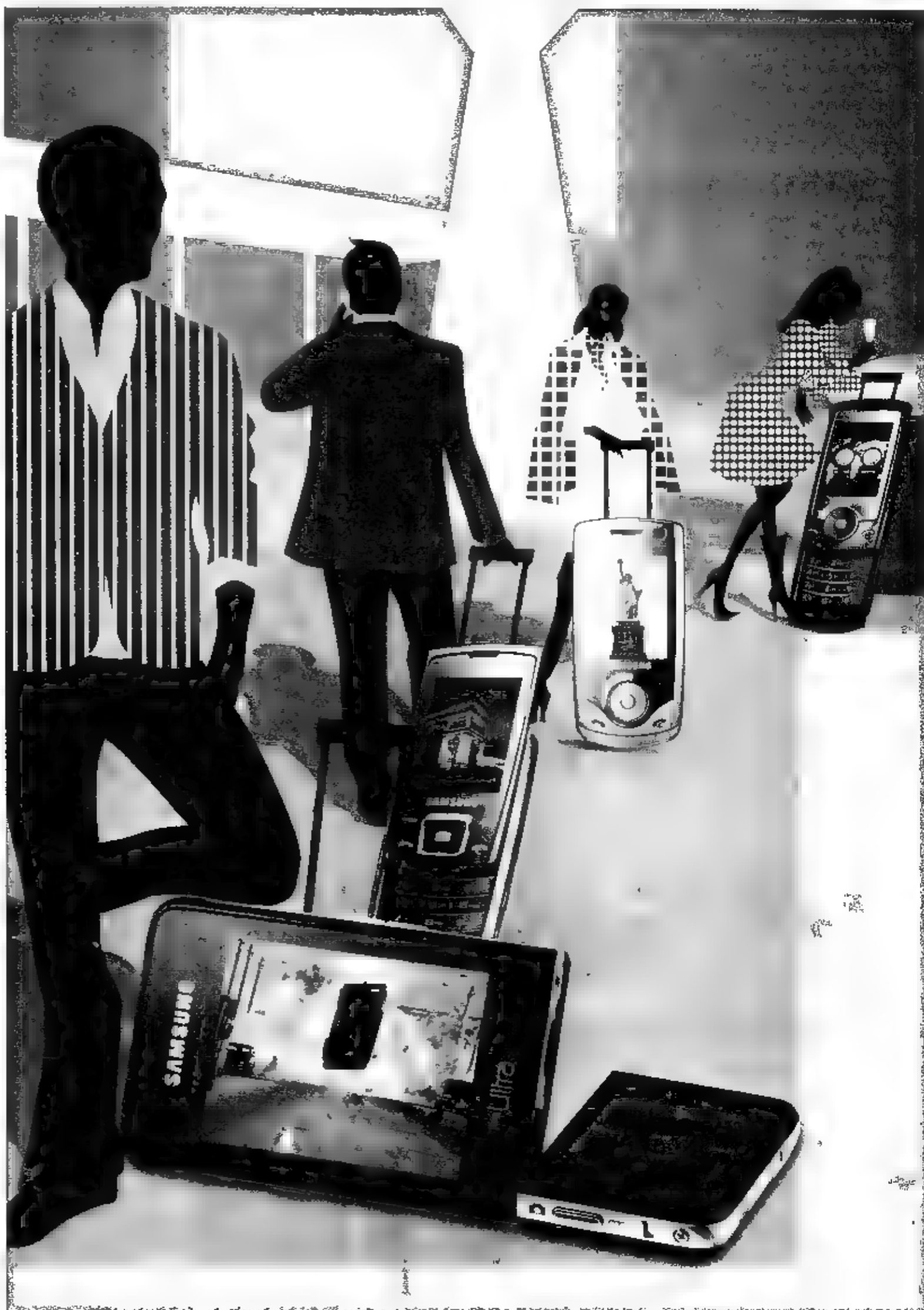
those long flights around the world.

Another offering from Samsung is its new, compact yet stylish slider phone, the Samsung D880. The D880 is the perfect mobile phone for the career-oriented. With its dual SIM capacity that automatically switches SIM cards according to the user's needs, it's the ultimate business

SAMSUNG/HZ



ULTRA Imaging Samsung G800



VERSATILITY exemplified with the Samsung D880



MULTIFUNCTIONAL and sleek Samsung I450



GIORGIO Armani-Samsung luxury mobile phone P520

## imagine a phone with jet-set features

This is imaginative technology by Samsung. With Samsung, it's not that hard to imagine. [ph.samsungmobile.com](http://ph.samsungmobile.com)

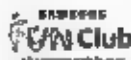
**F500 DivX Technology**  
A video compression system that allows you to watch four (4) full-length movies in your phone.

**E840 Living World Technology**  
It is an interactive phone display wherein the color of the sky or background changes according to the time of day.

**U700 UGo Technology**  
It is a technology wherein the wallpaper automatically changes from a country you've been in to the country where you currently are.

**U600 Dual Time Technology**  
It is a time display feature that automatically shows two time zones of owner's preference.

\*Go, Living World, and Dual Time Technology are star features of select Samsung mobile phone models.



Samsung Electronics Philippines Corporation Ground Floor Bonaventure Plaza, Ortigas Avenue, Greenhills, San Juan, Metro Manila  
Samsung Customer Contact Center: TOLL FREE 1-800-10SAMSUNG for PLDT or 1-800-35SAMSUNG for Digital.



• Official DivX® Certified mobile phone.  
• Plays all versions of DivX® videos with standard playback of DivX media files.



# Samsung Mobile: 2007 Choice Brand for the Ultra Lifestyle

SAMSUNG, A LEADING PROVIDER OF MOBILE PHONES AND TELECOM systems, has redefined lifestyles with its various activities this year. Bigger and grander, Samsung Mobile solidifies its commitment to its consumers by being present at the key aspects of the ultra lifestyle ... whether it be in sports, style, sights, or sound. Charles Choi, Vice-President for Samsung Mobile, says, "The year 2007

has been a phenomenal year for us. We have made our presence felt in so many different areas that are important to us and our consumers. All these are in line with our expansion thrust for the year, to bring Samsung to the fore of public awareness and consciousness through our different marketing activities."

## Samsung Sports

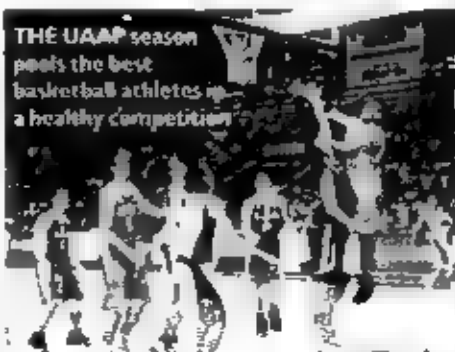
Samsung's corporate agenda to give back corresponds with the very spirit of sports. That is why Samsung has been fully committed to supporting sporting events.

As the presenting partner of the UAAP, Samsung showed its commitment to fostering teamwork and camaraderie. Samsung hosted a series of public events in schools with a variety of programs and promotional events. During the UAAP A. Star Game, Samsung donated four 29-inch TV sets and four DVD players to the Bantay Bata Foundation.

The National Taekwondo Championships, on the other hand, provided the youth with a platform to express and pursue their passion. Samsung's affinity to the sports was again evidenced. The championships were

divided among the senior men and women, junior men and women, and grade school boys and girls. The awarding ceremony was held in the Glorietta Activity Center.

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THE UAAP season pools the best basketball athletes in a healthy competition



CHEERS for the UAAP season



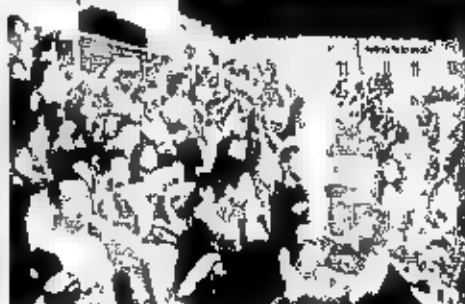
SAMSUNG Mobile brings even more excitement to the UAAP season



EVERYONE shouts for defense!



RAH! Rah! Rah!



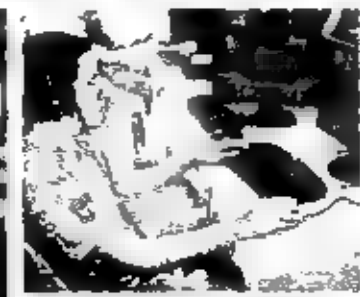
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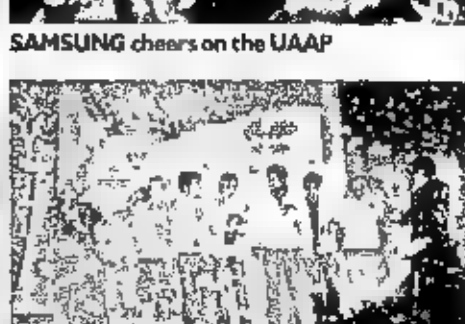
TAEKWONDO athletes battle it out with kicks



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SHOOT that ball!



THE AWARDING ceremony of 2007 Samsung World Cyber Games Philippines

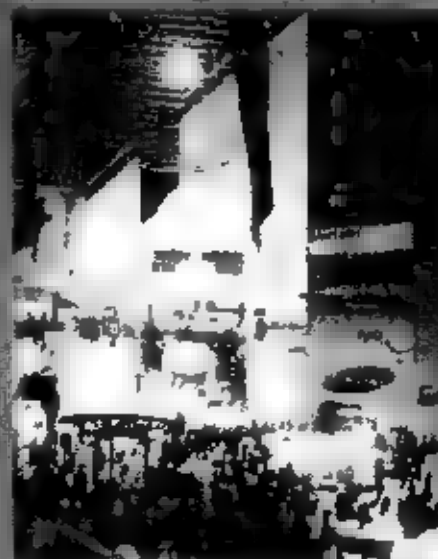
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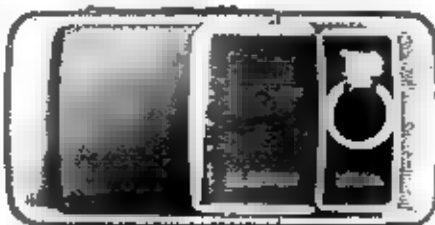


# Samsung Mobile ready to dominate 2008

From page H1

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Giorgio Armani's signature collection fashion show. Technologically advanced and beautifully designed by no less than Armani himself, the P520 exudes elegance with its 2.6-inch QVGA TFT LCD screen, full touch-screen user interface and a specially designed Giorgio Armani leather carrying case is also included for protection. It

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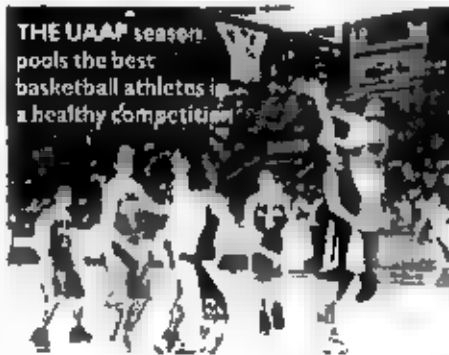
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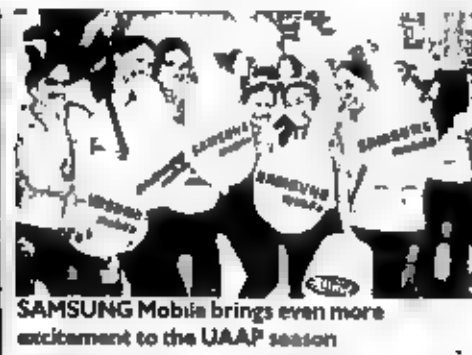
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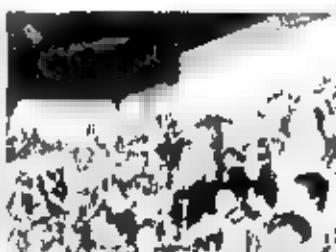
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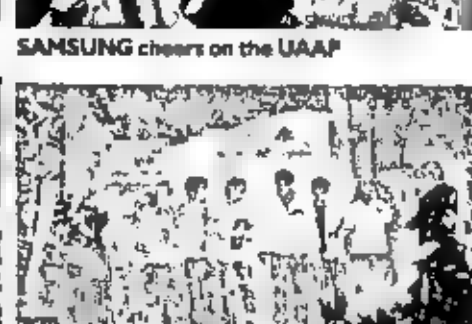
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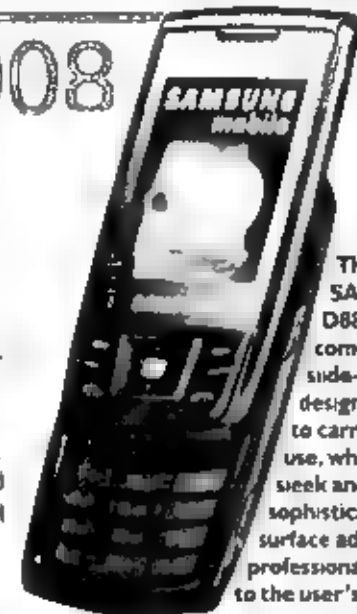
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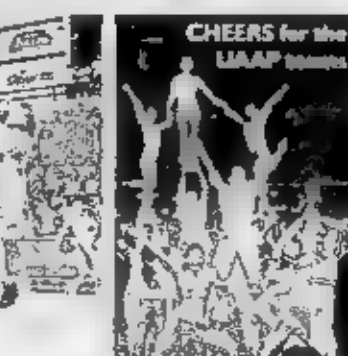
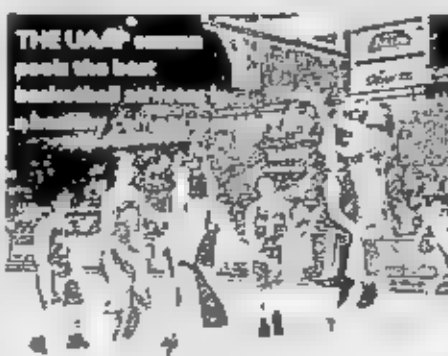
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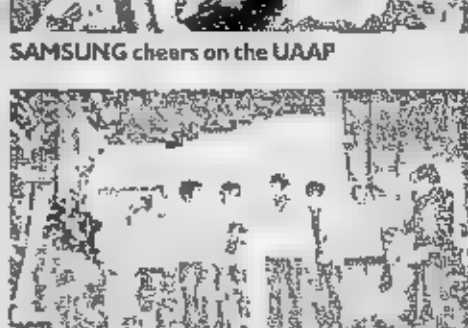
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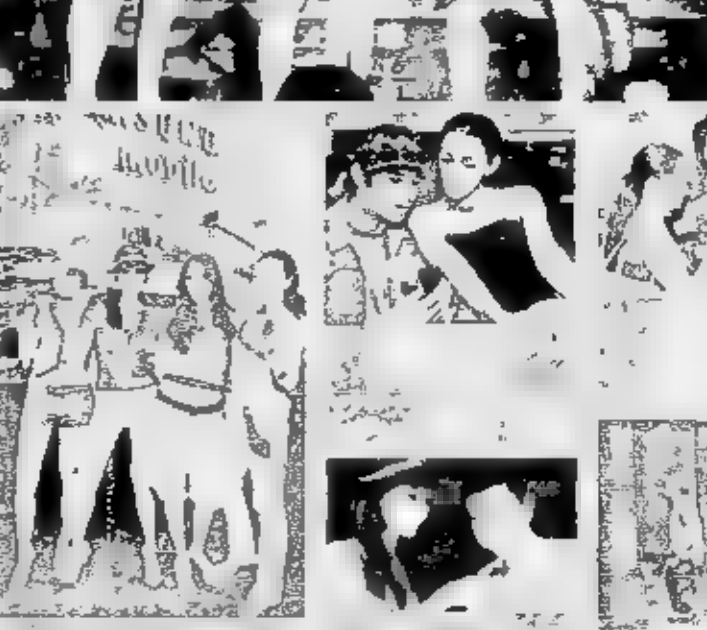
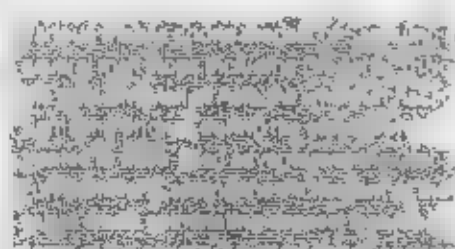
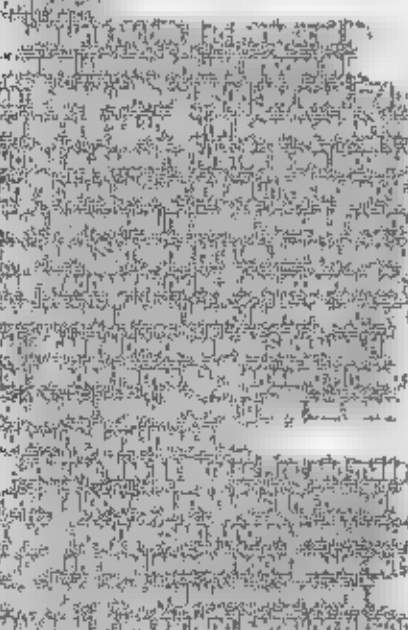
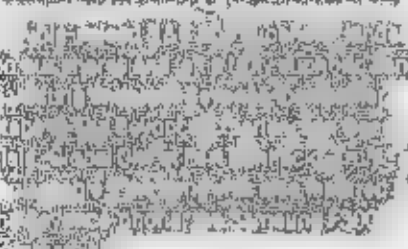
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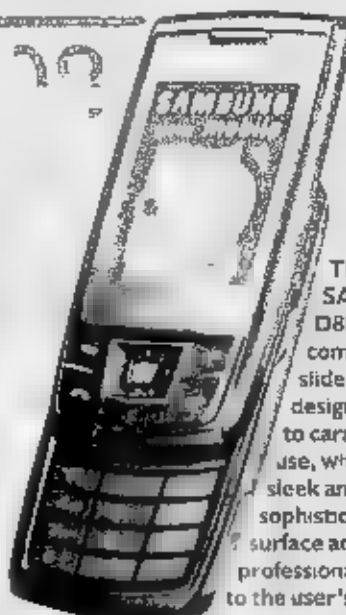
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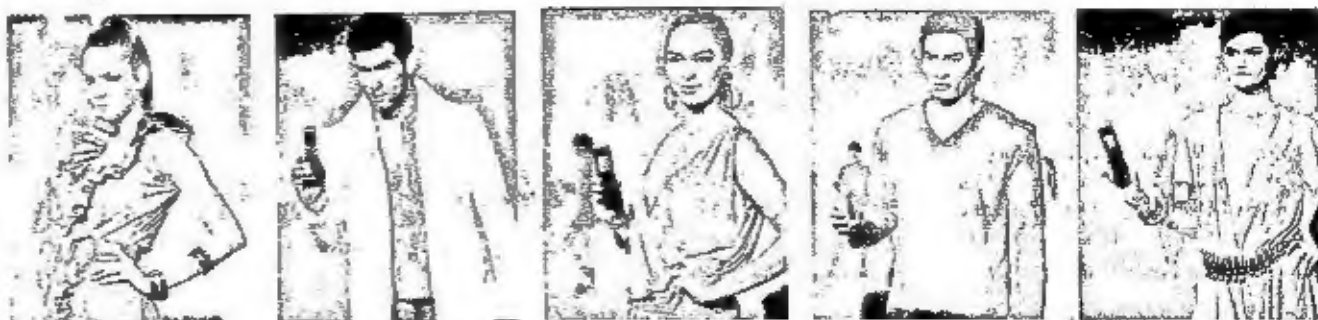
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# Samsung Style

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A PARADE of Samsung mobile phones kick off the Samsung Metrowear Summer show which featured the creations of Amina Aranaz-Alunan, Louis Chaparols, Patrice Ramos-Diaz, Rhett Eala, Rajo Laurel, and young and vibrant designers Mitzi Quilendino, Solem Heuseff for Tan-Gan and Charina Sarte



SAMSUNG Metrowear's "The Next Generation" featured the collections of 10 innovative and young designers namely Antonio Garcia, James Reyes, Patty Estaño, Cary Santiago, Protacio, Ivarlusi Aseron, Joey Samson, LZ Punzalan, accessory designer Wynn Wynn Ong, and shoe designer Brian Tenorio.

## MYTH



SAMSUNG launches Myth, outfit by Randy Ortiz.



FASHION by Myth



URBAN look by Myth



LOOKS by Randy Ortiz for Myth



COCKTAIL fashion by Randy Ortiz for Myth



MYTH showcases diverse fashion and lifestyle offerings from the country's most notable designers and artists including Ivarlusi Aseron, Jojie Lloren, Dennis Lustico, Henri Calayag, Jing Monis, Deltz Pilar, Joey Samson and Randy Ortiz, who serves as Myth's Creative Director.



SAMSUNG Metrowear Auggie Cordero Show runway with fresh flavor for the sensual and stylish settings in the metro.



AUGGIE Cordero's 50-piece collection featured daywear pieces and silhouette cocktail dresses



THE SAMSUNG Metrowear Retail Show paraded the latest designs from some of the hottest local retailers.



FASHION by Ilaya Couture at the Samsung Metrowear Retail show.



TWENTY top local fashion designers presented their fashion forecasts for 2008 in high fashion style at the Samsung Metrowear Gala Show.



PARTICIPATING retailers include Folded & Hung, Apple & Eve, Pink Soda, Details, Graude, Kaiser, Ilaya Couture, K & Company, Maud and Religioso.



SLEEK and ultra chic with the Samsung mobile phones. SENSE and style make perfect sense!



TWENTY years of modeling at its best at the Professional Models Association of the Philippines (PMAP) show



BUBBLES Paraiso works the ramp with a Samsung mobile phone



ISABEL Rocas is stunning with a Samsung mobile phone



## PMAP 20th ANNIVERSARY



CURRENT and former members of the PMAP took the runway once again and effortlessly flaunted the most beautiful fashion creations by the country's top designers. A parade of Samsung mobile phones signals the start of the show.



## Samsung Style

Samsung Style is a new fashion and lifestyle brand that is designed to be the ultimate in style and sophistication. It is a collection of clothing, accessories, and home decor that is inspired by the latest in fashion and design. The brand is designed to be the ultimate in style and sophistication, and it is a collection of clothing, accessories, and home decor that is inspired by the latest in fashion and design.

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# Samsung Society



**INNO** Sotto, Tessa de Leon-Gonzales, Tessa Prieto-Vaides, and Kim Aclanza



**SAMSUNG** General Manager Jerry Lacion, Samsung VP Charles Choi, and Head of Mobile Group Fe Varilla propose a toast to the ultra lifestyle



**CRICKETTE** and Donnie Tantoco



**LIZA** Gokongwei



**DIVINE** Lee



**SANTI** and Marilen Elizalde



**STORES** Specialists, Inc.'s Anton Huang and Miriam Quiambao



**MIGUEL** Pastor, Susan Joven, and Ben Chan



**THE SAMSUNG** Ultra Edition II mobile phone is stylish, sleek and slim



**CHRISTINE** and Paco Sandejas



**CHOI** and Marissa Sojuangco

Samsung launched its Ultra 2 Edition phones—stylish and functional sliders like Edition 10.5 (U600) and 3.5G Ultra Edition 12.1 (U700), metallic clamshell like Edition 6 (U300) and candy bar like Ultra Edition 9 (U100)—in a stunningly beautiful and intimate celebration witnessed by a select group of celebrities at the Aladdin Ballroom in the Park View Manila. It was a celebration of the sleek, stylish and functional design of the Ultra Edition II series, all packed in these phones. Slim. Stylish. Smart. With Samsung's new Ultra Edition II phones, it's not that hard to imagine.

# Samsung Stores

Enriched lifestyles emerge as Samsung Mobile concept shops opened in Robinson's Galleria, Cyberzone SM North Edsa, Ayala Center Cebu, and Linketkai Cagayan de Oro.

Samsung Mobile's concept shops showcase a wide array of Samsung products catering to all consumers' needs in this digital age. Discover Samsung's superior quality, fashionable, and sleek mobile phones and accessories in a comfortable and sleek shopping ambiance.



**ROBINSON'S** Galleria concept shop



**CAGAYAN** de Oro concept shop



**EXPLORING** the different models of Samsung mobile phones and heighten the senses as these mobile phones are conveniently displayed for your better appreciation.



**AYALA** Center Cebu concept shop



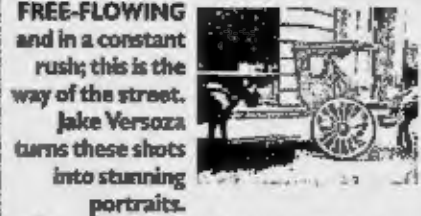
# Samsung Sights

Samsung launched G600, the 5-megapixel mobile phone in all its beautiful glory. Five young and vibrant photographers—Ronnie Salvacion, Noelle Hernandez, Steve Tirona, Jake Versoza, and Paolo Pineda—took the Samsung G600 to the streets to capture the most stunning photos taken from a slim and stylish mobile phone. Their photos took center stage during the Samsung G600 launch and an open exhibit at Greenbelt 3.

Ronnie Salvacion tested the power of the Samsung G600's LED flash by shedding light to the beauty of night scenes for the "Flash Night" photo series. Model-turned-photographer Noelle Hernandez showcased her "Secret City" series using the different shot modes of the Samsung G600. Steve Tirona's "Urban Runway" series is a reflection of how fashion originates from street culture and philosophy. He brings urban scenes into life with the 16 million brilliant colors that the Samsung G600 offers. Jake Versoza's favorite subjects comprised his "Street Portraits" series. Taken with the help of the Samsung G600's High Sensitive Shot are moments in the streets of Chinatown, Binondo. The "Red Dot" series of Paolo Pineda are a collection of city shots, stolen scenes and spontaneous moments captured with the Samsung G600's 5x optical zoom.



**PAOLO** Pineda presents the mystery of "The Red Dot" punctuated by 5x optical zoom capabilities of the Samsung G600.



**SAMSUNG** Vice-President for Mobile Division Charles Choi, Samsung G600 Photographers Noelle Hernandez, Paolo Pineda, Ronnie Salvacion, Steve Tirona, Jake Versoza, and Samsung Head of Mobile Phones Fe Varilla with host Bianca Gonzales toast to the launching of the 5-Megapixel Samsung G600



# imagine a new measure of style

Every millimeter matters in the design of the Ultra Edition II series. Imagine a 3.2 megapixel camera, music player and advanced Smart User Interface—all packed in these phones. Slim. Stylish. Smart. With Samsung's new Ultra Edition II phones, it's not that hard to imagine.

[ph.samsungmobile.com](http://ph.samsungmobile.com)





**Samsung Ultra Edition**

**INNO Sotto, Tweedle de Leon-Gonzales, Tessa Prieto-Valdes, and Kim Atienza**

**SAMSUNG General Manager Jerry Larson, Samsung VP Charles Choi, and Head of Mobile Group Fe Varilla propose a toast to the ultra lifestyle**

**CRICKETTE and Donnie Tantoco**

**LIZA Gokongwei**

**DIVINE Lee**

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**THE SAMSUNG Ultra Edition**  
If mobile phone is stylish, sleek and slim.

**ROBINSON'S Galleria concept shop**

**CAGAYAN de Oro concept shop**

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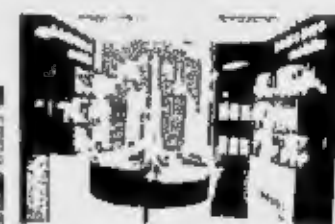
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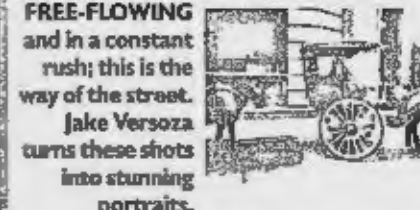
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THE BEAUTY of night will be unveiled with the power of LED flash by Ronnie Salvacion as seen in "Queen of the Night"



STEVE Tirona traps the styles and hues of urban fashionistas into the frames



FREE-FLOWING and in a constant rush; this is the way of the street. Jake Versoza turns these shots into stunning portraits.



NOELLE Hernandez unveils the secrets of the city of Beijing with the Samsung G600.



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imagine a new measure of style

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Samsung Official Contact Center TOLL FREE 1-800-10SAMSUNG or 1-888-3SAMSUNG for details

